



NAVY NEWS

SEPTEMBER 2017

What a debut

■ HMS Queen Elizabeth, the largest warship ever built for the Royal Navy, towers over the pubs and homes of Spice Island as she makes her debut in her home port. (see pages 2 and 47)

Picture: Innes Marlow, InnesMarlowImages



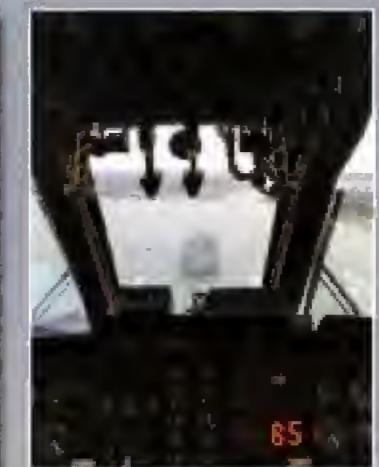
Secrets of the deep

Divers reveal wreck of HMS Vanguard

In charge

HMS Duncan leads NATO task force

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'We've shown the world how'

Dad, thanks for getting me up for this.

Sixteen-year-old Sea Cadet George Mitchell hadn't been overly keen to get up a little after 3am. Nor too his dad Ray, who faced a drive of a good hour or so from Reigate in Surrey so he could enjoy a plum position on Round Tower by 5am.

Despite the ungodly hour, the historic fortification turned traditional vantage point for naval well-wishers was already half full.

As the first streaks of red and yellow began to devour the night and give form and feature to the shadows and silhouettes in the Solent, people began staking claims to spots along Portsmouth's old sea wall. Some had even been here all night.

They came from Berkshire, Hertfordshire, The Isle of Wight. They caught the last train out of Waterloo. Or the first ferry from Ryde. Or they slept in camper vans parked up in Old Portsmouth. Or they drove through the night.

Long before dawn there was



On an historic day for Portsmouth, Britain and the Royal Navy, **Lorraine Proudlock** and **Richard Hargreaves** mixed with the crowds on the Solent waterfront for **HMS Queen Elizabeth's** home debut.

a constant stream of people towards the waterfront, drawn as anticipant football fans are to Fratton Park on Saturday afternoons to big FA Cup clashes.

Cameras slung around their necks, rucksacks on their backs, flasks or sandwiches in their hands - some even carried portable chairs and mats - they made for the best vantage points on the sea front.

As they converged on Round Tower and the Hot Walls, police launches began to head out into the Solent.

The weather forced an entry two days earlier than most people had expected - or planned for.

Some 150 cadets of TS Ark

Royal from Reigate planned to spend Thursday night in Fort Blockhouse to rise on Friday for the best seat in the house.

Instead just George and his dad Ray were able to make it for the rearranged date and time.

"Today is a day to savour," said Ray. "It's about being here - in 20 or 25 years time you can say: I was there. It's well worth coming down for."

Half a kilometre away, thousands of people were already lined up all along the shoreline at Gunwharf as dawn broke, with the earliest of the early birds making good use of the chairs outside the Waterfront Cafe at the foot of the Spinnaker Tower.

As the clock ticked

down, a number of residents of Gunwharf's flats emerged onto their balconies; some fully dressed, others in their pyjamas and dressing gowns, all clutching mugs of tea and coffee, as well as the odd glass of bubbly.

For it was a day of celebration, with many spectators forgoing sleep to ensure they got the best view.

Jack and Alice Shaw left their Midlands home at 2.30am to drive to Portsmouth.

"We love the Navy and didn't want to miss this momentous occasion," said Jack.

"Queen Elizabeth is enormous, she's going to look fantastic when she gets all of her aircraft."

An hour before the maiden entry and the Hot Walls, bastion walls and Round Tower were a sea of figures, mostly in blue or black coats and the occasional luminous jacket - security and safety officers provided by the council, who had laid on buses from 3.30am to ferry the public to the seafront (they were well used, too).

At the same time, a flotilla of yachts and small craft - RIBs up to pleasure cruisers, 60 or 70 in all - began to slip past Round Tower, finally joined by a packed Gosport ferry which temporarily broke the bonds of the inner harbour for a unique sightseeing excursion.

But what of the principal guest at this great naval party? Through the night, those with internet access had tracked the ship's progress - as they had followed her six weeks of sea trials off the Scottish coast - courtesy of her AIS identification system.

There! Between the navigation post with its blinking light and Spitbank Fort, a shimmering, ghostly apparition in the early morning light, her distinctive twin islands making her stand out from other Solent traffic.

She seemed to glide ethereally along the horizon, first out of sight of the crowds on the fortifications, then, in the growing light of the coming day, manoeuvring to line up for the specially-cleared and marked channel created to

allow Britain's biggest warship in and out of harbour.

That channel had been widened from its original 210 metres to 450 metres, and straightened as much as possible to avoid major course alterations, with a navigable channel 100 metres wide dredged especially for the new ship (at the waterline she's 40 metres across).

Nowhere is narrower in the harbour than the entrance; just 210 metres separate Round Tower from Fort Blockhouse. And although there's a good distance at the waterline, the carrier's flight deck is 30 metres wider (the two islands are offset 25 metres to starboard, which mean they actually sit over the water).

The bridge team, plus tug crews, and Chief Admiralty Pilot Tony Bannister, had spent hundreds of hours in bridge simulators - especially the one at HMS Collingwood - to ensure a textbook first entry.

Happy that the wind was under 15kts - it was a cool, but fine and largely still August

■ *Continued on Page 47*



UK carrier strike group takes charge of mighty US warship Shape of things to come

F-18 SUPER Hornet fighter aircraft 'scream' as they are catapulted off the deck of the USS George HW Bush, trailing clouds of steam.

Fleet Air Arm Hawks and RAF Typhoons prowl the skies off the Scottish coast.

British, American and German surveillance and refuelling aircraft lurk on the periphery; 15 warships from five different nations sail the seas; submarines loiter under the waves.

Overseeing all of this is the UK Carrier Strike Group (UKCSG), embedded aboard the Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS George HW Bush.

For two weeks, Commander UKCSG, Cdr Andrew Betton, and his battlestaff ran operations in preparation for when HMS Queen Elizabeth enters service.

Exercise Saxon Warrior, which also involved personnel from 42 Cdo and 29 Cdo Royal Artillery, played out a number of warfighting scenarios around the UK coast.

The Bush and elements of her carrier strike group – cruiser USS Philippine Sea, destroyer USS Donald Cook, and Norwegian frigate HNoMS Helge Ingstad – joined forces with Type 23 frigates HMS Iron Duke and Westminster to take on the 'enemy' – Norwegian frigate Otto Sverdrup, US destroyer Truxton and cruiser Leyte Gulf.

The exercise, which involved around 9,000 personnel, was key to ensuring the Royal Navy are fully equipped ahead of the arrival of HMS Queen Elizabeth.

And the Royal Navy's future flagship got the chance to sail at the heart of the Bush carrier strike group as they met up in the North Sea.

HMS Queen Elizabeth's Commanding Officer Capt Jerry Kyd welcomed aboard Cdr Betton and Capt Will Pennington, CO of the Bush.

"Exercise Saxon Warrior has offered an unparalleled opportunity for the Royal Navy to rehearse the co-ordination of the various ships, aircraft and submarines that will form the UK's Carrier Strike Group," said Cdr Betton.

"Exercising command of the USS George HW Bush Strike Group enabled me to understand, at first hand, the dynamics of directing a powerful, multinational force in an operational environment.

"Protecting and sustaining the aircraft carrier is the main role of the strike group's frigates, destroyers and supply ships, enabling the air wing to project influence and power at range.

"The exercise has allowed us to



● An F-18 Super Hornet is catapulted off the flight deck of the USS George HW Bush; A Wildcat hovers over a submarine during Exercise Saxon Warrior

prove our national operating concept and build invaluable experience, competence and credibility alongside our closest strategic ally.

Over two weeks, US Naval personnel trained side-by-side with UK pilots, engineers and deck handlers to build combined maritime and aviation capability and capacity.

"Saxon Warrior allows both US and UK Naval forces a chance to hone our interoperability skills," said Rear Adm Kenneth Whitesell, commander US Carrier Strike Group 2.

"Particularly important is the alignment of US carrier strike groups and the UK carrier strike group. This unique opportunity affords the spectrum of warfighting for both strike group staffs, strengthening our military understanding and capability."

The Bush, which carries 80 or more combat aircraft

on her 4.5-acre flight deck and towers 20 storeys above the waterline, was on the final leg of her deployment in support of Operation Inherent Resolve, the Global Coalition's fight against ISIS.

Col Phil Kelly, RM, the COMUKCSG Strike Commander, said: "This exercise is a great demonstration of the UK's relationship with the United States who are helping us in getting back our carrier strike capability and making a success of the Queen Elizabeth aircraft carrier programme."

During the past few years the Irishman has spent time on the USS Ronald Reagan, Harry S Truman and the Bush as part of the long-lead specialist skills programme preparing the Royal Navy for the biggest warship it has ever had.

"We also had the great opportunity to fly over and land on HMS Queen Elizabeth," he said. "It was emotional – this has been a long time coming and something we will never forget.

All these elements were co-ordinated by the Joint Tactical Exercise Planning Staff (JTEPS) working from Faslane.

"Exercise Saxon Warrior is an

incredibly important and exciting

– that seminal moment that you step out on the deck at sea of the UK's newest aircraft carrier after having landed on for the first time."

Lt Marian Taylor, COMUKCSG's Helicopter Element Co-ordinator, or HEC, said: "I've been learning what they do and how they do it.

"The biggest challenge is the fact the two countries are separated by a common language – everyone is very positive and aware of the aims of Saxon Warrior and achieving those and working towards that but the most difficult thing is to remember to say trash rather than rubbish."

Pilot Lt Cdr James Capps, the Fixed Wing Operations Officer on the exercise, said: "We are extremely fortunate. Being here on the George HW Bush has given us the opportunity to see where we are and what we need to achieve for our own UK carrier strike capability and to be here to see how the US does it has been fantastic preparation."

"They have been so welcoming and we are extremely grateful for the experience."

Sea King helicopters from 849 NAS were also at the heart of the exercises as the RNAS Culdrose squadron prepare for a return to carrier strike in the helicopter's replacement, Merlin Crowsnest.

Iron Duke's Wildcat was among the 100 aircraft taking part in Saxon Warrior, while the ships were supported by the RFA tanker Wave Ruler.

Swedish tactical air controllers provided forward observation to ships and aircraft dropping ordnance onto Cape Wrath, while Royal Marines from 42 Cdo conducted joint personnel recovery operations.

All these elements were co-ordinated by the Joint Tactical Exercise Planning Staff (JTEPS) working from Faslane.

"Exercise Saxon Warrior is an

incredibly important and exciting

step in the regeneration of the UK's Carrier Strike capability," said JTEPS commander Capt Andrew Stacey.

"The generosity of the United States Navy in the provision of not only a carrier strike group but also mentoring and exercise enablers has been crucial in ensuring that the Royal Navy is on the right path to stand shoulder to shoulder with the USN with a shared carrier strike heritage."

One of the smaller but essential exercise elements was HNoMS Otto Sverdrup, named after a Norwegian Arctic explorer, and currently the flagship for Standing NATO Maritime Group One (SNMG1).

"I have enjoyed this exercise very much," said Norwegian task force commander Cdr Petter Kammerhuber, who is also the commander of SNMG 1.

"It has provided us with a lot of warfare training and a lot of training for the staff as well. It has really been a good exercise to increase our operational readiness level."

Otto Sverdrup has been training hard during the last week off the Scottish coast doing force protection exercises.

The ship, which is equipped with state-of-the-art air defence missiles, conducted multiple air defence exercises and force protection serials against small attack craft.

She also carried out a RAS with Wave Ruler and undertook shore bombardments at Cape Wrath with her high-speed 76mm main gun.

"Saxon Warrior has been a great exercise for us," said Capt Frode Rote.

"There are a lot resources in the area.

"A lot of aircraft, vessels and helicopters so it is very good training in our primary warfare skills. We are a capable frigate and we are used to operating in close inshore waters like the Minches."

The Otto Sverdrup also carries

the highly-effective Norwegian Naval Strike Missile capable of hitting land and sea targets 100 miles away.

"Significant contributions from Standing NATO Maritime Group 1 and from Norway, Germany and Sweden were essential in making this a successful multinational exercise," added JTEPS Capt Stacey.

While the fighting serials took place, a remote Scottish loch was a hive of activity as dozens of truckloads carrying hundreds of tons of stores and fuel were loaded onboard the aptly named American supply ship USNS Supply.

The process took four days to complete and included trucks bringing equipment from as far away as Sigonella in Italy.

All this just to get the American carrier group home "across the Pond".

JTEPS logistics officer Lt Alex Meaden said: "We've been impressed with the scale of the US logistics chain and we've learnt a lot from them which will help us to prepare for HMS Queen Elizabeth carrier logistic operations."

Capt Kyd said: "The USS George HW Bush battle group is an awesome embodiment of maritime power projection."

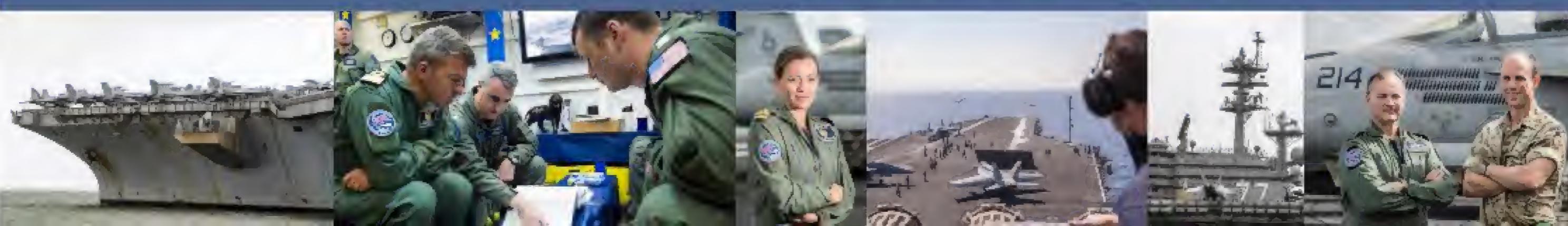
"And given that the United Kingdom's Carrier Strike Group Commander and his staff were embedded on board the US carrier for Saxon Warrior shows the closeness of our relationship with the US Navy and the importance that both nations place on the delivery of the UK's carrier strike programme."

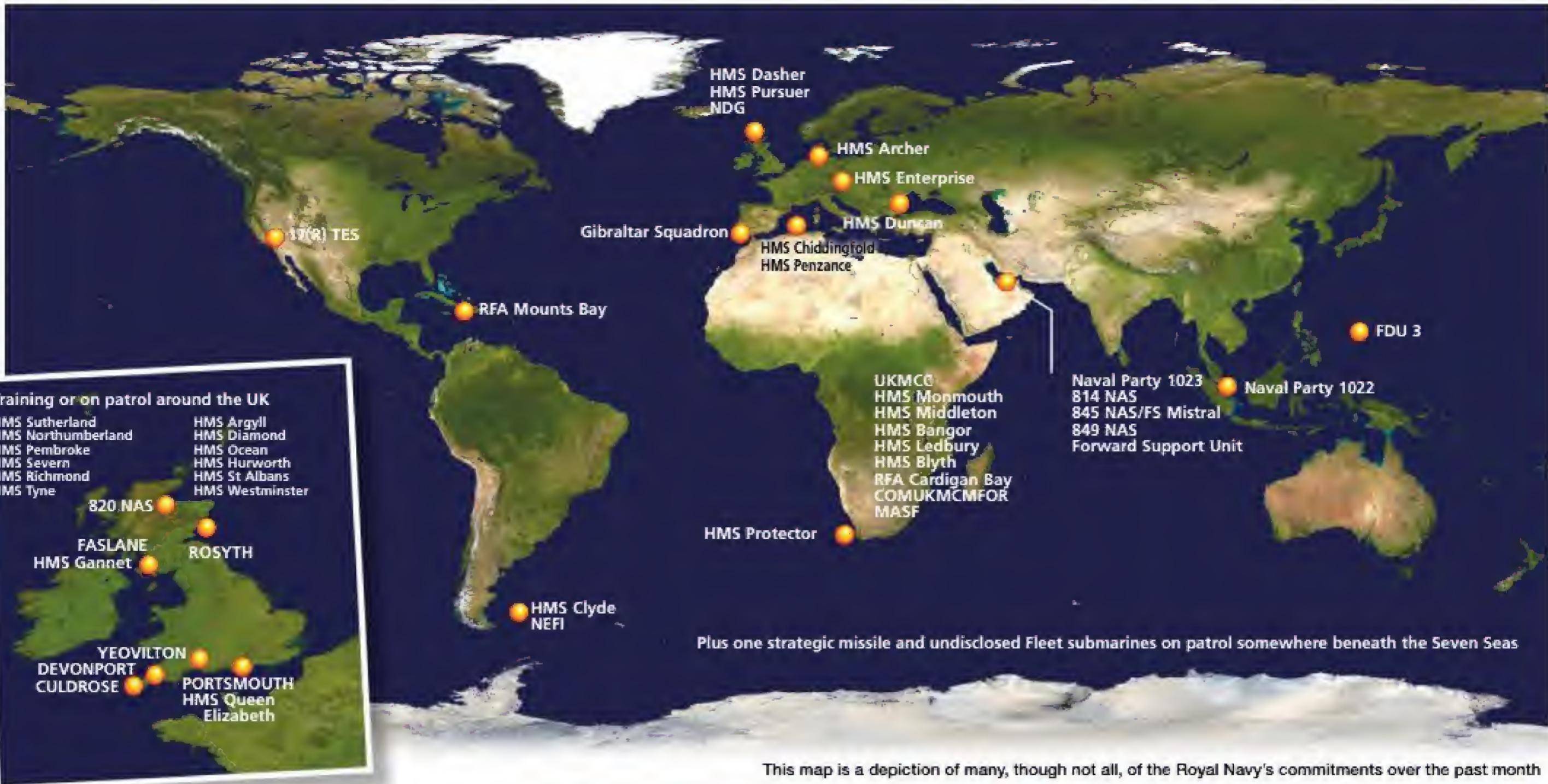
"HMS Queen Elizabeth is at the start of her journey to generate to full warfighting capability, but we are working hard to ready ourselves to take our place in operations and the line of battle alongside our closest allies."

HMS Queen Elizabeth is expected to embark her first F-35B Lightning II strike fighter aircraft next year.

● Below, from left, aircraft on the flight deck of USS George HW Bush; Cdr Andrew Betton takes part in a briefing aboard the carrier; Lt Marian Taylor of UKCSG; Lt Cdr Gordon Clark observes flight operations aboard the Bush; Aircraft take off from the Bush; UKCSG Strike Warfare Commander Col Phil Kelly and Information Warfare Commander Lt Col Olly Croyton

Main image: LPhot Iggy Roberts; Other images: PO (Phot) Ray Jones, Sgt Russ Nolan and Tristan B Lotz and Zachary Wickline, USN





This map is a depiction of many, though not all, of the Royal Navy's commitments over the past month

FLEET FOCUS

Protecting our nation's interests

SIZE matters, so they say, and nothing could be truer as thousands of spectators turned out to welcome **HMS Queen Elizabeth** into her homeport of Portsmouth for the first time (see pages 1, 2, 47 and 48).

The crowds were left in awe at the sight of the biggest warship ever built for the Royal Navy as she made her way through the narrow mouth of the harbour.

We also give a glimpse of how the future flagship will operate as, prior to her arrival, Queen Elizabeth met up with the USS George HW Bush carrier strike group (see page 3), which was being operated by battlestaff from the **UK Carrier Strike Group** as part of their training.

To prepare Portsmouth Harbour for her arrival, millions of metres of mud had been dredged, revealing a treasure trove of naval items (see page 13).

HMS Queen Elizabeth required refuelling twice during her initial sea trials (see page 7). The complicated process saw two coastal tankers travel from the oil fuel depot in Gosport to Invergordon in Scotland.

The carrier, along with her younger sister **HMS Prince of Wales**, which is being named this month, were celebrated at the **Edinburgh Military Tattoo** (see page 23).

UK Carrier Strike will include Type 45 destroyers and **HMS Duncan** is currently leading a NATO task force (see centre pages) in the Black Sea and led the force into the Ukrainian port of Odessa – the first Royal Navy vessel to visit the city in nearly a decade.

Port visits were on the agenda for **RFA Mounts Bay** as she island hopped during her Caribbean deployment (see page 15). Her Wildcat helicopter has so far delivered two blows to the drugs trade in the region as aircrew identified illegal drug plantations.

Four British warships met up in Oman (see page 5) as **HMS Blyth** and **Ledbury** prepared for a three-year stint in the Gulf. They are replacing **HMS Chiddingfold** and **Penzance**, currently heading home to the UK.

Survey ship **HMS Protector** has spent most of the summer surveying the length of the West African coast (see page 17), with goodwill visits to Ghana and Namibia.

Patrol ship **HMS Clyde** has returned to the Falkland Islands after her maintenance period (see page 6) and got straight into two training exercises with personnel from the Army and RAF.

Preparing to rejoin the Fleet is **HMS Albion** (see page 11), which welcomed the Princess Royal, along with friends and families of the ship's company, for a service of rededication following the assault ship's £90m refit.

Also in the latest stages of her regeneration is **HMS Westminster** (see page 5), and her ship's company were put through their paces in a disaster-relief exercise in Plymouth.

Royal Marines have undergone extensive live-firing training (see page 9), with personnel from **54 Cdo Squadron** taking part in Exercise Commando Dragon in Wales and men from **40 Cdo** using Northumbria Police's specialist training centre in Gateshead.

Royal Navy divers from **Northern Diving Group** in Faslane helped to raise a dummy bomb which was designed to sink the Tirpitz (see page 20). Highball, sister of the 'bouncing bomb' used in the Dambusters raid, was raised from the bed of Loch Striven in Scotland.

The centenary of the sinking of **HMS Vanguard** sparked a ten-month study of the wreck (see page 21), which has largely confirmed the findings of the original enquiry.



Edge of a revolution

VIEW from the BRIDGE

IN JUNE, Rolls Royce demonstrated the world's first remotely operated tug in Copenhagen Harbour.

Modest as this accomplishment may seem, it opens the way for a transformation within the shipping industry. Researchers predict unmanned ships will enter commercial service within the next decade, and autonomous vessels will surely follow, bringing with them increased navigational safety, greater cargo capacity and reduced fuel costs, all of which will result in lower prices for customers.

The Royal Navy's ambition is just as great, even though our intentions differ. International security is deteriorating, and demands on the Navy are growing, but we face an uphill task to recruit the men and women with the technical skills we need. Automation is one way we can square the circle.

We are not seeking to remove people from the equation altogether. A machine will never have 'the Nelson touch', and whether fast-roping from a helicopter or directing cyber operations from behind a computer, success will always rest on our ability to outthink and outfight our opponents.

Nevertheless, sending people to distant theatres or putting them into harm's way is an expensive way of

operating, as well as being demanding for the individual, and their families. The more we can do back at headquarters, the greater our financial and operational freedom on the frontline.

The Royal Navy has an enviable record for efficiency. The first Type 26 frigate, **HMS Glasgow**, will have a ship's company of 157 and a displacement of 6,900 tonnes. In comparison, the previous **HMS Glasgow**, a Type 42 destroyer, was 2,000 tonnes lighter but had a ship's company almost twice as large. The new Type 31e General Purpose Frigate will be operated by fewer people still.

Lean-manned ships are just the beginning. In the future, pilotless aircraft will deliver supplies to ships at sea and to Royal Marines behind enemy lines and 3D-printing will enable spare parts to be manufactured on demand.

Data analytics will help predict and prevent failures in equipment – or medical conditions in people – while synthetic training will shift professional development from the ship to the simulator, and more time in the simulator means more evenings and weekends at home and a better work-life balance.

This might sound like the stuff of science fiction, but all of this technology exists today and the commercial sector is leading the way.

That's why the Royal Navy is exploring the current market to identify existing capabilities that can be brought into service quickly.

Unmanned Warrior and Information Warrior are cases in point; we used our convening power to bring together technology firms from around the world to show us what their kit could do. From autonomous robotic systems operating in squads to the use of bandwidth acceleration technology, we achieved things that no one else had done and proved that the theoretical was, in actuality, quite possible.

Through these exercises, the Royal Navy has staked its claim to be a leader of innovation within the UK Armed Forces and internationally, but the question now is 'what next'? We've seen what commercial technology offers today – the test of our ambition is to bring these capabilities into service alongside or in place of existing equipment.

Based on our experience from Unmanned Warrior, robotic systems could take over routine mine-hunting tasks in UK waters today. We also know that it should be possible to develop a remotely-operated rotary-wing aircraft to go to sea with the Type 31e in place of a manned helicopter. Of course, letting go of the familiar in order to make way for the new requires leadership.

Risk is inevitable, but then nothing in innovation or in warfare has ever been achieved by playing it safe.

A revolution in naval technology is waiting to happen – the question for the RN is whether we have the necessary courage as an organisation to embrace it.

Two in, two out in Gulf

FOUR British warships met up in Oman – two about to begin a three-year stint in the Gulf, the other pair at the start of a marathon journey back to the mother country.

Heading for the UK are HMS Penzance (bound for Faslane) and HMS Chiddingfold (Portsmouth).

Assuming their places in Bahrain – the hub of Royal Navy operations east of Suez – are HMS Blyth and Ledbury, who've made the epic odyssey to the Middle East hopping from one port to another every fortnight or so...

...which is exactly what Penzance and 'Cheery Chid' must do on their 6,000-mile passage home.

"The Royal Navy has a fantastic reputation as one of the best at mine detection and mine clearance," said Lt Cdr Jim Lowell, Penzance's CO.

"After 1,105 days providing that capability to the region with Chiddingfold, we've handed the baton on to our sister ships Ledbury and Blyth, who will continue to underpin the UK's wellbeing with their very capable mine hunters."

While assigned to the RN's minehunting force in the Gulf – comprising a battle staff, command ship (currently RFA Cardigan Bay), two Sandown-class ships for locating mines in deep water (Bangor and now Blyth) and two Hunts which specialise in shallower waters (Middleton and now Ledbury).

Penzance has spent over 7,500 hours at sea – 44 weeks – and steamed in excess of 34,000 miles during her time in the Middle East, taking part in numerous mine warfare exercises with US, French and regional navies and visited 12 nations to foster strong ties between them and the UK.

Ready to pick up where she left off is Blyth, whose Commanding Officer Lt Cdr Peter Ware said his sailors had gone through "extensive preparations and training ready to commence mine counter measures operations in the Gulf."

"It is often quoted that nearly 40 per cent of the world's energy flows through the important sea lanes of this region, which demonstrates the continuing importance of Royal Navy mine hunters in the Gulf."

Penzance and Chiddingfold are now homeward bound for an autumn return to the UK, while Blyth and Ledbury acclimatise to Bahrain in high summer.

Meanwhile, Bangor spent two days working with her Saudi doppelgänger, HMS Al Jawf.

The Royal Saudi Navy bought three Sandowns at the beginning of the 1990s at the same time as the RN was investing heavily in the class of deepwater minehunters.

The two-day training period covered damage control and minehunting techniques, with a focus on some of the more detailed functions of the NAUTIS Command System which both navies use.

"We enjoy training with our international counterparts," said Lt Cdr Will Blackett, Bangor's CO. "There is always a natural bond between fellow mariners and this was certainly the case when working with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia."

"Both crews learned from each other and there is no doubt that our ability to work together has improved as a result."

Bangor's Bosun, PO(MW) Stevie Baxter, was previously an instructor at HMS Collingwood, where Saudi sailors are trained.

"It was interesting to see some of the Saudi sailors I have met and trained before; it's great to see our trainees doing the job for real and I'm glad that our hard work has paid off," he added.



Masters of disasters

TWO-SIX, PUSH!

Sailors from HMS Westminster summon all their strength to move a smashed-up Daewoo Matiz out of the way in the aftermath of disaster striking the capital – answering the question: what could a frigate do in the event of a crisis?

The ship's company were put through their paces alongside the Metropolitan Police and its Marine Policing Unit in a combined disaster-relief exercise. In Plymouth.

The Portsmouth-based warship is in the later stages of regeneration following a two-year-long refit in her home base.

A permanent fixture on the two-month-long OST programme provided by the Flag Officer Sea Training organisation is a Friday DISTEX (DISasTer relief EXercise), with a special facility at Bull Point in Devonport able to recreate all manner of mayhem: fires, floods, crashed cars, vehicles stuck in rivers, collapsed buildings and bridges, leaking water supplies, downed electricity wires – everything you might expect in the wake of a storm, earthquake, or tsunami.

It's bread and butter to RN personnel – they regularly assist overseas in the wake of such natural disasters – but the presence of the Metropolitan Police with their vast experience of dealing with complex scenarios such as terror attacks or the Grenfell Tower fire brought a fresh perspective.

"If a disaster was to befall the UK, Westminster could be deployed to support the civil authorities in their relief efforts," explained Sub Lt Harriet Delbridge, the frigate's deputy logistics officer.

"We can act as a hospital, an airport, a communications hub, a canteen, a water treatment plant and provide a pool of highly-

Argus' wand of change

THE Royal Marines upgraded battlewagon made its debut at sea, spending four weeks aboard aviation training ship RFA Argus to help write the operating manual for the crews who will fly it for the next couple of decades.

Two Fleet Air Arm squadrons – 845 and 846 – have switched from Sea Kings to the green Merlin Mk3, transferred from the RAF.

But to truly support the green berets on amphibious operations around the globe, the Merlins have to be converted into Mk4s which feature folding tail sections and rotor heads – making them ideally suited to flying from Royal Navy and Royal Fleet Auxiliary vessels.

The Mk4 – painted grey, not green – briefly debuted at CHF's home of Yeovilton just ahead of air day, but it will be February before the first models are handed over to the squadrons while test pilots conduct extensive trials and assessments.

Among the first parameters to lay down are the Safe Helicopter Operating Limits for using the Mk4 – gathering data on wind speed, sea state, roll, pitch and other factors which determine the boundaries for landing the Merlin and taking off again.

One aircraft plus a project team joined Argus off the South Coast, carrying out 200 deck landings before returning to Leonardo's works at Yeovil.

"The month on Argus was an intense working period; the logistics involved were incredible and throughout this trials period the Argus team has been extremely cooperative and accommodating," said Scott Ewens, project manager for Leonardo.

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Fort Vic back in Blighty

VETERAN support ship RFA Fort Victoria has arrived back in the UK after more than two years away, mostly supporting front-line operations in the Middle East.

The auxiliary ship arrived in Crombie, Fife, to be greeted by the head of the RFA, Cdre Duncan Lamb.

"During an eventful and often hectic operational deployment Fort Victoria has provided a consistently high level of support to UK and coalition partners displaying capability and versatility in both the Mediterranean and Arabian Gulf theatres of operations," he said.

While away on her 26-month deployment, Fort Vic carried out 150 replenishments at sea, issuing 58,634 cubic metres of F76 diesel – enough to fill one million average family saloons – 1,669 cubic metres of F44 aviation fuel (enough to fill a 747 jumbo jet seven times) and transferred 617 pallets of various stores, ranging from ice cream to ammunition.

She spent the majority of her time East of Suez in support of coalition forces' counter piracy/narcotics/terrorism operations. She was also called upon to re-deploy to the Aegean between March and May last year to provide assistance and additional assets to support the international effort against people trafficking.

In March this year Fort Victoria's embarked Sea King played a vital role in the location and seizure of a drug-running dhow. These actions resulted in a US boarding team apprehending the suspect vessel and successfully locating 278kg of pure heroin. This drug haul, if distributed, would have been worth upwards of £40m on the streets of the UK.

Fort Victoria will now undergo a period of maintenance, equipment upgrades and modifications, which will allow her, together with the Tide-class tankers, to operate in support of HMS Queen Elizabeth when she enters service.

Tide is high

THE second of the Naval Service's new tankers should be making her debut in her home country this month after a 16,000-mile journey from the other side of the world.

RFA Tideforce was mid-Pacific as this edition of *Navy News* printed – or about one third of the way to Falmouth from the builders' yard in South Korea.

Having successfully completed sea trials off the Korean peninsula, the second of four 39,000-tonne Tide-class vessels for the Royal Fleet Auxiliary built to support HMS Queen Elizabeth, Prince of Wales and their escorts.

All four ships in the class – spring, -race, -force and -surge – are being built at the DSME yard in Okpo-dong, before heading to the UK and the A&P yard in Falmouth to receive 'plug and play' weaponry such as Phalanx automated guns, secure communications and computer systems – turning tankers into military tankers.

Tidespring has been converted and is undergoing trials before being formally handed over to the RFA in the autumn, while Tideforce is undergoing sea trials.



● The Paras' kit is lowered to them in one of Clyde's Rigid Raiders while (above) the ship anchors off the barren Falklands landscape during Exercise Joint Guardian

Clyde's Falklands flex

THE RN's largest permanent presence in the Falklands has twice flexed her muscles in the past month to demonstrate her willingness – and preparedness – to safeguard the South Atlantic islands.

Following her return from maintenance in South Africa, HMS Clyde got straight down to business in order to work up her combined ability with the Army and RAF, plus the local defence force and civilian authorities to protect the two main islands (East and West Falkland) as well as the many outlying settlements in the archipelago.

For many of the patrol ship's crew, this was the first time they had operated with embarked military forces, represented by B Company, 3 Para – more accustomed to swinging beneath silk than riding

the ocean waves.

The red berets hopped aboard Clyde for a series of Wet And Dry Embarkation Rehearsals (WADERs) – amphibious operations, played out in slow motion.

Many of the soldiers had never stepped aboard a warship before, so the first task was to get them used to life at sea, the layout of the ship, procedures and kit, before practising embarkation and disembarkation via helicopter from the flight deck or Clyde's own Rigid Raiding Craft.

With preparations complete, Clyde weighed into Exercise Cape Bayonet ready to embark up to 95 troops and their equipment and deposit them wherever HQ British Forces South Atlantic Islands dictated.

Unfortunately some particularly brutal weather forced a change of plan and Clyde was instead called upon to embark members of the Falkland Island Defence Force and deliver them ashore by RRC to conduct training. The plus side of this was a rare, and very welcome, opportunity to build a closer relationship with the local volunteers; outside of their part-time soldiering duties, the defence force are full-time residents of the Falklands and the main focus of the ship's assurance mission.

From Cape Bayonet it was straight into another exercise, Joint Guardian, which gave Clyde the chance to

showcase her flexibility. First landing personnel from 7 Royal Horse (Parachute) Artillery by Rigid Raider, the ship then turned into a floating command centre as the HQ element of 3 Para came aboard to direct operations ashore, making use of Clyde's Bowman communications system.

The ship also practised her ability to act as a mini hospital ship by embarking additional medical assistants from Mount Pleasant; it meant the sickbay and ward could provide emergency treatment for up to six casualties if required.

Clyde's flight deck team, led by PO(AH) 'Mo' Morris and supported by chefs, engineers and seamanship specialists from a ship's company of under 40, were called into action to support personnel helicopter transfers and refuelling operations to allow the BFAF Sikorsky S61 helicopter to remain on task for the duration of the exercise.

"With such a small ship's company playing so many key roles onboard, this period has proven to be highly demanding, but rewarding in equal measure," said CO Lt Cdr James Reynolds.

"Throughout both exercises, HMS Clyde has been thoroughly tested and successfully demonstrated her full range of capabilities and her ability to work with the other diverse elements of the British Forces in the South Atlantic."



Shaking off the cobwebs

HMS Montrose has returned to Plymouth after successful machinery and weapons trials at sea – only three weeks after leaving dry dock from a three-year upgrade.

The 23's engines were pushed to the limits, propelling the vessel to her top speed during manoeuvres to simulate extreme weather conditions.

The short stint at sea was long enough to allow the frigate crew to get used to living and working on board – for a large number it was their first taste of life at sea.

"People said I looked a little green from sea sickness at first, but you soon get over it and get on with the job," said Std Tanya Moore.

Weapon shoots have involved the weapons specialists and those manning the operations room – the latter stood-up for 24/7.

And the trials brought Montrose within a few miles of a Chinese task force heading towards the Baltic for a joint exercise with the Russians.

Meanwhile, the catering team provided a wide and varied menu over the period, ranging from the classic Royal Navy 'delicacy' of cheesy hammy egg, to lamb tagine.

It's not all work though, the ship's clubz Melanie Haslam has conducted daily circuit training on board using the flight deck, or encouraged shipmates to try out the revamped gym.

"The new gym on board is great," said Lt Matt Bowden, a leading player in the RN rugby team. "It combines a wide range of functional fitness equipment and the crew love it. Definitely one of the most comprehensive gym set ups across the surface fleet."

Montrose underwent work alongside in Plymouth over the summer before she resumes trials this autumn.

Workboats on the books

The RN's flotilla of workboats is being thoroughly refreshed with a £48m investment in more than three dozen new craft.

Whitehall signed a deal with Dorset firm Atlas to re-equip the Senior Service with numerous workhorse craft between 36 and 60ft long.

Thanks to their design, the boats will be able to switch roles by plugging in/removing different modules – a similar concept to the 'mission bays' in the new Type 26 frigates.

As a result, they'll support diving operations, general work duties in the Antarctic and ferrying sailors and equipment to and from Britain's new aircraft carriers.

The boats will either be carried on larger vessels, such as ice survey ship HMS Protector, or Queen Elizabeth and Prince of Wales, or serve at RN establishments.

The contract will directly support 15 jobs at Atlas, plus three times as many people in the supply chain.

It covers the design and construction of up to 38 boats as well as in-service support for the fleet for a further two years after the final boat is accepted. The first craft will enter service next year.

There's Slovenians off the port bow...

HMS Enterprise basks in the Slovenian sunshine as her stint as flagship of a NATO minehunting group begins in earnest.

Normally surveying the Seven Seas, the Devonport-based ship is switching roles for the next months as the command vessel of Mine Countermeasures Group 2, the NATO group responsible for dealing with any mine threats in the Mediterranean/Black Sea region, as well as spreading the NATO word in the many countries the force visits.

Led by the RN's Cdr Justin Hains, the command staff joined Enterprise in Palermo. The group presently only consists of the flagship; Turkish, British and Italian minehunters join the 'star ship' once summer leave ends.

Being a lone wolf hasn't stopped Enterprise getting around.

From Sicily she made for Slovenia's main port, Koper, where she enjoyed a berth right next to the historic city centre.

The visit was brief, but long enough for Cdr Hains to meet senior officers of the local 430th Slovenian Naval Division and the Mayor of Koper, and for Enterprise to host a ship open to visitors session.

Precisely 667 Slovenians came aboard Enterprise for a look around, even though the gangway was only open to the public for two hours.

The next Adriatic port, 250 miles down the coast, was Split in Croatia, with the passage south allowing Enterprise to put her survey launch Spitfire in the water to gather seabed data so charts can be updated.



Revamp for iconic outpost

THE outpost with arguably the best view in the Navy is to receive a £2m upgrade as Gibraltar's iconic 'Windy Hill' station is partially rebuilt.

Sitting high above the Strait of Gibraltar, personnel at the monitoring facility keep an eye on 60,000 ships entering or leaving the Mediterranean, or crossing between Africa and Europe.

But after more than a century of constant operations, keeping an eye on traffic visually, over the radio and electronically, Windmill Hill Signal Station – to give the facility its correct title – needs work.

Over the next 12 months, the complex will be expanded and improved, with extra monitoring equipment installed.

The station, which is located on the hill of the same name about one third of a mile from the southern tip of Gibraltar, allows near-panoramic views of the strait and neighbouring bay.

Although now under Joint Force Command rather than reporting directly to the RN, it draws the bulk of its staff from the Senior Service.

As well as monitoring the waters around Gibraltar on behalf of the United Kingdom and its allies, they also support the international fight against drug trafficking; the narrow strait separating the two continents are a known route for shipping narcotics into Europe – and information provided by Windy Hill has led to illegal shipments of drugs and tobacco being seized.

The Commander British Forces Gibraltar, Cdre Mike Walliker, got work under way on the extension with a ceremonial breaking-ground ceremony at the site – nicknamed Windy Hill because of its exposure to a near constant onrush of air.

He says the upgrade will usher in "a new chapter in the long and distinguished history of Windy Hill" – there's been a monitoring centre here since the late 19th Century – and bring it "bang up-to-date".

He continued: "The facelift that we are giving over the next few months means that the first-class support that the Rock has provided to the many tens of thousands of ships of all shapes, sizes and nationalities which all – annually – navigate through one of, if not the most important maritime chokepoints, will improve and be second to none."

"Equally – and importantly – today serves as a warning and a reminder to all those who wish to use this narrow and congested stretch of water for criminal or nefarious activity."

IT'S a problem many of us have encountered while soaking up the sights of the far north of Scotland: finding a fuel station.

Tricky enough for your family motor in a sparsely-populated part of the country.

Now try Britain's biggest warship.

The tanks of HMS Queen Elizabeth needed to be filled not once, but twice during her initial sea trials in the North Sea – each time in the former naval base and small port of Invergordon.

Just how much fuel capacity does a 65,000-tonne aircraft carrier have to meet not only her power requirements, but also those of her intended air wing of F-35B stealth fighters and Merlin helicopters?

The answer: 4,000,000 litres of F-76 for the ship and 3,000,000 litres of F-44 for the embarked aircraft.

That's over one million gallons for the ship, three quarters of a million

gallons for the air wing.

Or seven million litres in all. You could fill your car up more than 127,000 times with that.

Queen Elizabeth won't be conducting her first replenishment at sea – the preferred method for sustaining naval operations, 'topping up' on the go – until next year; the first of the Tide-class tankers built to resupply her, RFA Tidespring, is currently undergoing trials in the Channel.

"Road tankers were not a practical solution – you would have around 120 lorries thundering across Scotland and into Invergordon for each fuel stop, taking approximately two weeks to complete a single tasking," explained Andy Scraggs, from the RN's Logistics and Infrastructure Division.

The solution? Chartering two British-crewed coastal tankers, the MV Sarnia Cherie and MV Sarnia

Liberty, from the defence contractor James Fisher Everard Ltd, one of the last major British-owned and operated tank-ship companies.

Having loaded both cargoes of F-76 fuel at the oil fuel depot in Gosport, each vessel, upon arrival in Scotland, was weighted down at the stern to counter the difficulties posed by the only available berth, a small, steeply shelving mooring, and proceeded to fuel HMS Queen Elizabeth through two 250-metre-long hoses.

The outcome? Two safe, efficient and effective fuelling operations completed on time, allowing Queen Elizabeth to first resume trials, then head for her home for the next half century (see pages 2 and 47).

● Tugs give the carrier a traditional maritime send-off as she leaves Invergordon

Picture: LPhot Pepe Hogan

Duchess to name second new carrier

THE second of Britain's two new aircraft carriers will be formally named by her sponsor on Friday September 8.

The Duchess of Rothesay – as the wife of the Prince of Wales is known north of the border – will perform the honours in Rosyth as the 65,000-tonne carrier takes centre stage, grabbing the limelight from her older sister.

The naming – a mixture of traditional naval ceremony and multimedia presentation and akin to the slipway launches of yore – will be followed a few days later by the flooding of the dock in which the carrier sits.

That will allow Prince of Wales to be moved to the neighbouring jetty – vacated at the end of June by HMS Queen Elizabeth – for fitting out.

Ramp success for F-35B

FOR the first time the Navy's jet of tomorrow has launched from a ski ramp while toed up with bombs and weapons.

Former RN flier turned BAE test pilot Peter 'Wizzer' Wilson was at the controls of the F-35B as it roared down the runway at Pax River, the US Navy's test and evaluation school, before lifting off from the ramp.

Fixed to pylons on the wings: four 500lb Paveway IV bombs and two ASRAAM short-range air-to-air missiles, as tests were carried out launching and recovering the fifth-generation fighter with an increased payload.



Invergordon scrutiny

"Your assistance has helped me close off an irritation that's been bugging me since I left the Service. And I'm now £9,000 better off."

Jon Gower, FPS Member



Jon had a nagging feeling that he had not received his pension supplement based on his period as a commissioned officer. We reviewed his circumstances and concluded he was right. As a result, he received a supplementary tax free lump sum payment, back payment of pension and interest too. His pension has also been increased to the correct rate. He tells us he's busy advising others to join the Forces Pension Society.

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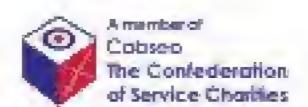
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Having a blast in the countryside...

PLENTY of explosives were the order of the day as personnel from Commando Logistics Regiment were put through their paces.

Members of 54 Commando Squadron took part in a two-week intensive training scenario at Sennybridge Training Area in mid-Wales.

Exercise Commando Dragon focussed on live fire tactical training, culminating in a live firing troop attack - complete with explosives.

Personnel were required to assess a building, construct the appropriate type of explosive and use it to gain entry.

Commandos conducted progressively more challenging activities, designed to test decision making and command and control throughout the squadron. From the youngest Sapper to the Troop Commanders, they were tested on their tactical acumen in complicated scenarios, complete with explosives.

The overall aim of the exercise was to ensure that the ranks of 54 Commando are ready in all respects to support the Lead Commando Group either on exercise or on operations anywhere around the world at five days' notice.

54 Commando Squadron are one of three field squadrons which contribute to the makeup of 24 Commando Engineer Regiment, which supports 3 Commando Brigade Royal Marines.

Also based in Chivenor, North Devon, 24 Commando Engineer Regiment is required to conduct operations across the spectrum of conflict in support of 3 Commando Brigade, meaning that each member must be trained in amphibious warfare, as well as know how to operate in the jungle, across deserts, over mountainous terrain and in arctic conditions.

Pictures: LPhot Joel Rouse



... and at urban training complex

THIS is how Royal Marines would take down terrorists and rescue hostages - as they move through a state-of-the-art training facility.

The men of Alpha Company from 40 Commando - normally based at Norton Manor near Taunton - spent three weeks using the first-rate facilities at Northumbria Police's specialist training complex in Gateshead.

Nowhere in the country is there the combination of ranges, simulators, mock streets and houses, plus classrooms and instructors, for troops and police to hone their skills than the Operational and Tactical Training Centre on an otherwise non-descript industrial estate on Tyneside.

Since opening in 2013, the complex has been used extensively by the entire Corps (only last month Faslane-based 43 Commando took US Marines through the facility).

The marines love it because it allows training unlike any other facility they currently have available.

The commandos are able to live fire at electronically-controlled targets from point-blank range all the way out to 60 metres. They can also shoot their rifles and Glock 9mm pistols in low or no-light scenarios using Night Vision Goggles.

Alpha Company ranks were put through their paces and were given progressively more challenging scenarios to deal with.

These included the use of mechanical methods of entry, from crowbars to sledgehammers to prising open locks and doors.

It also fine-tuned their skills in planning and carrying out complex building clearance - in today's military parlance Modernised Urban Combat (in the past it's been known variously as house-to-house fighting, close quarters battle, and FISHing - Fighting In Someone's House).

Above all, the police facility allows realistic and challenging training - fundamental for Royal Marines held at high readiness to deploy to any environment across the globe.

"I enjoyed the police compound because it's a lot more complex than other facilities I have previously trained at. The most enjoyable part was going through the various mechanical methods of entry and using all the different equipment," said Marine Callum Davies.

Pictures: LPhot Joel Rouse

WARSHIPS
GUIDE TO THE ROYAL NAVY 2017/18

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Formalities and fun

ACCOMPANIED by Commanding Officer Capt Tim Neild, Princess Anne moves along the rear rank of HMS Albion's Guard of Honour - formed up in the assault ship's cavernous vehicle dock especially for the rededication.

The sponsor who launched the ship 16 years ago, attended her commissioning two years later and who has kept in touch with the 18,500-tonne vessel's progress ever since returned to Devonport to celebrate the next chapter in Albion's life after a £90m refit.

Originally the plan was to hold the rededication service in Plymouth Sound, ferrying guests out by landing craft for an extra-special treat.

But the British summer (wind, non-stop rain) put the kibosh on that.

Luckily, Albion is large enough for Plan B: a rededication alongside in the vehicle deck, normally filled with Royal Marines' armour, vehicles and kit. Devoid of such equipment, it became an enormous hall - and perfect for an indoor service.

As is tradition, the captain, officers, and ship's company of 350 Royal Marines and sailors formed up on parade in their best uniform, with swords and medals, in front of families, friends, affiliates as well as defence and industry VIPs.

Chaplain of the Fleet the Venerable Ian Wheatley provided the blessing and prayed for the safety of the crew and all who sailed in her on future operations, with the Band of the Royal Marines Plymouth completing the ambience.

"You will be ready for what ever you are asked to carry out," Albion's sponsor told the massed ranks before her.

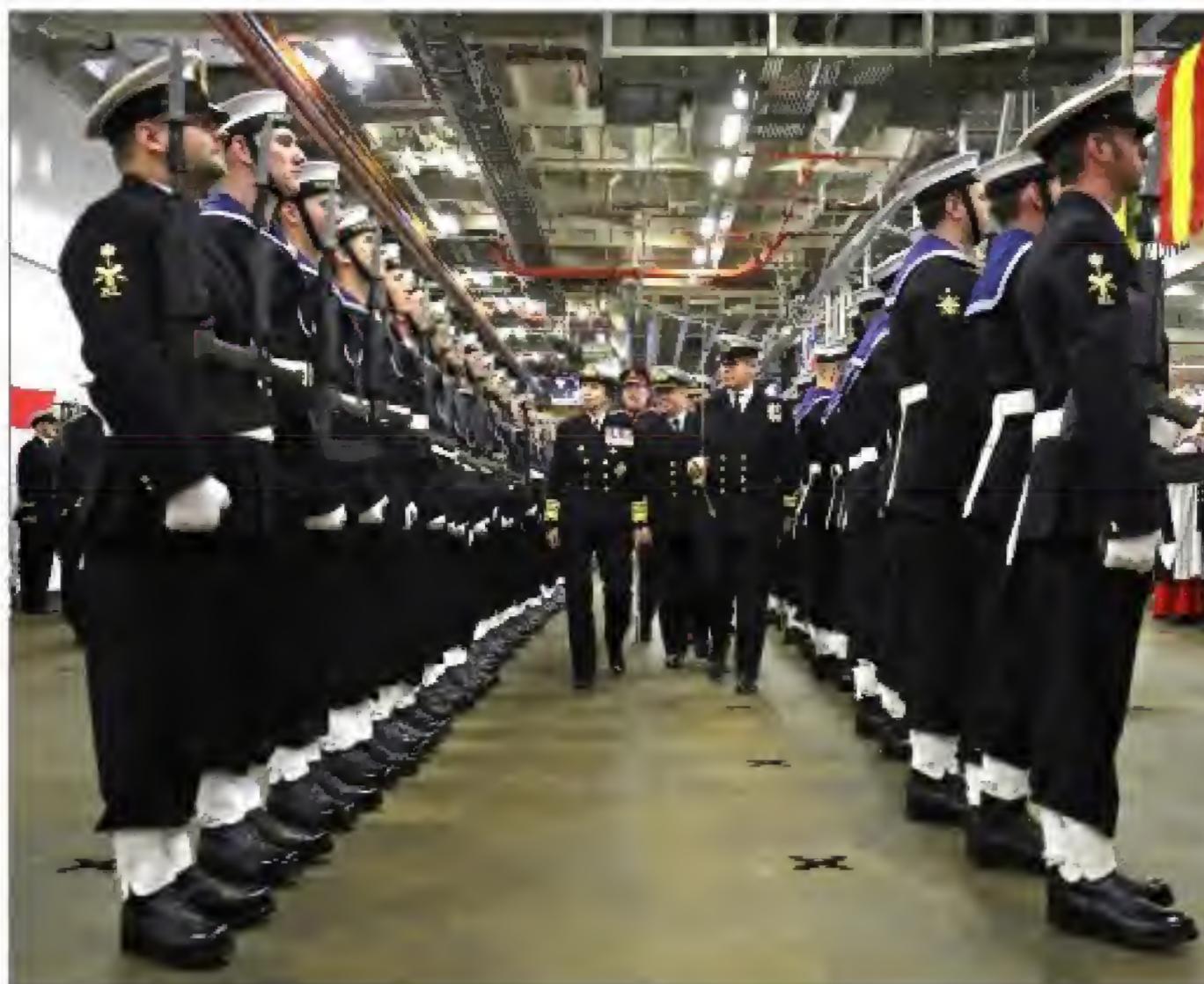
"I hope today's events makes it easier for your loved ones to understand what you do onboard when you are away on deployment and helps maintain that emotional connection despite the difficulty of separation."

As well as inspecting the Guard, the Princess Royal toured the ship and took the opportunity to meet the families, presenting several Long Service and Good Conduct Medals, before joining the youngest member of the crew, 18-year-old ET Kyle MacDonald, in cutting the specially-made rededication cake, prepared by chefs at nearby HMS Raleigh.

"I was very nervous to start with, but the Princess was very calming and helped me. It was an honour and will stay with me forever," said the teenage cake cutter.

No less nervous at meeting royalty was PO Gareth Brazendale, one of five crew members to collect his LSGC medal from the Princess Royal. "Today will always be a special day and something I will never forget," he said.

Capt Neild said the sponsor's presence onboard made the occasion "extra special" and a "rare treat".



He continued: "Rededication is about refreshing that commitment, in particular to HMS Albion and the Fleet in which we serve. It celebrates everything which is good about the ship and marks the beginning of a new chapter for Albion as we return to operations."

Shortly after the formal festivities, a chance for the crew to let their hair down inviting families aboard once more, this time for a fun day.

They were allowed to clamber around the Royal Marines' heavy-duty vehicles, scale the climbing training wall, marvel at the size of the helicopter landing deck and, below it, the floodable dock for the landing craft.

Capt Phil Newton, from the ship's Royal Marines assault squadron, gave his children Lucy, 11, and Alex, 13, a tour of one of his vehicles.

"It's important to show our families where we work when we go away. We tell them we are part of a different family, the wider ship's and Navy family," he said. They can then envisage where we are and what we are doing from experience - it will mean so much more to them and help them understand why we are away."

Navigator Lt Cdr James Robey said his family - Emily, 11, Sebastian eight, and Charlie six and partner Zoe - had "a cracking time" looking around.

He continued: "I can tell them many times what we do and what the ship can do, but there is nothing like actually seeing the ship and how big it is and amazing them all with the marines' 'toys'.

"It helps them to cope with us all being away when they can picture what we might be doing - with something that is familiar - and be reassured that I will be back."



● The Princess Royal chats with two of Albion's junior rates and (below) a baker's dozen of female junior ratings let their hair down after formal proceedings have finished in the loading dock

Pictures: LPhot Ken Gaunt, FRPU West



load between them.

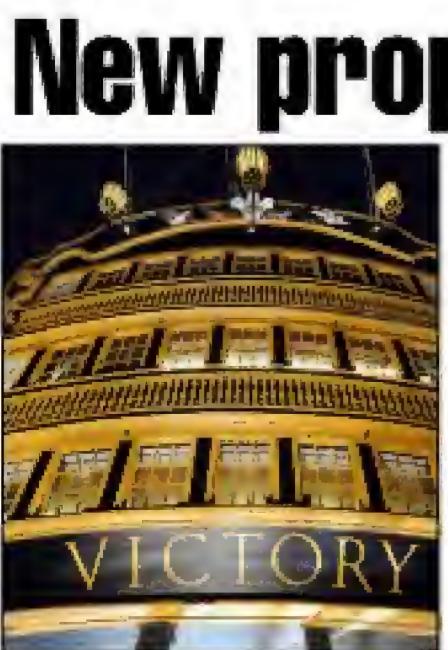
Each prop is telescopic and features a cell monitoring the load around the clock and which is easily adjusted.

Andrew Baines, Project Director at the National Museum of the Royal Navy, which now owns and operates the ship, said "The hull is moving at a rate of 0.5cm each year, so 20 centimetres over the last 40 years. This is untenable and must be remedied before irreversible damage is done.

"The new support system will cradle the ship much like she would be in water.

"The existing cradles will be removed in stages across the project's duration and visitors will start to notice a real change in the look of the dry dock."

The National Museum awarded the £3 million project to BAE Systems.



AN 18-month programme to re-support the world's most famous warship from sagging under her own weight is now under way.

HMS Victory has been sitting in a dry dock in Portsmouth since 1922 supported by 22 steel cradles positioned six metres apart.

It has been well documented that the 252-year-old ship is sagging under her own weight and following a detailed laser scan of 89.25 billion measurements and computer modelling, a new support system has been designed to mimic how the ship would sit in water.

The existing steel blades are placing considerable strain on the hull structure and will be replaced by 134 15-ft adjustable steel props fitted over two levels. This will completely revolutionise the support system and share the ship's 2,000 tonnes



WW2 aviators remembered

TWO large wreaths add colour to an otherwise bleak setting on the northernmost fringe of the continent.

Soldiers from the Russian Air and Space Forces provide a Guard of Honour as two British naval aviators are formally honoured 76 years after their bodies were washed up on one of the most remote places in Europe.

For the three quarters of a century in between, pilot Sub Lt Edward 'Seymour' Burke and his gunner Leading Airman James Beardsley shared a common, unmarked grave, their sad fate lost to the world.

But the final resting place of the pair has now been located, marked with a proper headstone, and finally dedicated in Russia - making it the newest and most northerly Commonwealth War Graves 'cemetery' in the world.

The two men crewed a Fairey Fulmar fighter, launched from the aircraft carrier HMS Furious in one of the first efforts to help the Soviet Union after it had been invaded by Hitler's armies in the summer of 1941.

The Royal Navy dispatched a task force to strike at German forces in two key ports in Nazi-occupied Norway close to the Soviet border: Petsamo and Kirkenes.

The attack on the latter was a rout with 13 of the 29 aircraft launched from HMS Victorious shot down and another eight damaged - with nothing accomplished.

The two-dozen aircraft launched by Furious found the harbour at Petsamo almost empty of shipping, but the attackers claimed a small steamer sunk and several jetties smashed.

One Albacore bomber and two Fulmars were lost - including Burke and Beardsley's.

Comrades in 800 Squadron watched the men ditch their damaged fighter "with smoke pouring from its engine" around half a dozen miles out to sea, then scramble into a dinghy.

More than seven decades later, the fate of the two missing men has finally been determined.

Their bodies were washed up at Vaido Bay on the Rybachy Peninsula - about 70 miles northwest of Murmansk and 30 miles from Petsamo - where they were buried by locals in an unmarked grave.

Seven decades later and the Russian military alerted the British authorities to the presence of the unidentified graves, sparking a three-year effort first to identify the two bodies, then erect a formal gravestone.

Records at the Navy's Historical Branch, including HMS Furious' log, helped the Commonwealth War Graves Commission to formally identify the dead, allowing a headstone to be produced, installed with the help of Russia's Northern Fleet (the peninsula is a military zone, while the grave site is only accessible by road for two months a year).

The Royal Navy's senior clergyman the Venerable Ian Wheatley, Chaplain of the Fleet, headed to the tip of European Russia with CWGC officials, senior Russian Navy officers and Andrew Furlong, one of Sub Lt Burke's relatives, for a service of rededication.

"There is no way of knowing how they died, but even in July, Vaido Bay is the harshest of environments," the Ven Wheatley said.

"The challenge of the restoration project undertaken by the Russian Northern Fleet and the war graves commission should not be underestimated, but the end result is that their grave is properly and honourably marked, and their sacrifice recorded, in the remote beauty of the Arctic tundra."

He led a joint ceremony with a Russian Orthodox priest who blessed the Soviet dead buried in the now-restored cemetery.

Capt Chris Connolly, Britain's Deputy Defence Attaché in Moscow, made the 150-mile round trip from Murmansk 12 months ago to inspect the graveyard - then largely overgrown - and was deeply moved by the transformation.

"We are immensely grateful to the Northern Fleet for their assistance, facilitating access to this remote site, transporting the memorial stone and refurbishing the graveyard," he said.

"It is unrecognisable from our visit last year, a huge amount of work has been done in the most difficult of conditions."

The names of the 24-year-old pilot and his 22-year-old gunner, holder of the Distinguished Service Medal, can also be found on the Fleet Air Arm monument in Lee-on-the-Solent, where a memorial service will be held later this year for relatives unable to make it to northern Russia.

● Chaplain of the Fleet the Venerable Ian Wheatley (in the green beret) and to his left Rear Admiral Anatoly Minakov, Deputy Commander Northern Fleet (Personnel) pay their respects at the fliers' grave



New prop system to preserve Victory

AN 18-month programme to re-support the world's most famous warship from sagging under her own weight is now under way.

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FOR nearly two decades at the beginning of the 20th Century the Schneider Trophy captivated aviation buffs.

Sponsored by the eponymous French financier, it pitted the best of the world's seaplanes against each other around a triangular offshore course.

In short, it was the Formula 1 of the skies. Pilots became as famous as their motor racing counterparts as they vied to win the *Coupe d'Aviation Maritime Jacques Schneider* – a rather gaudy trophy depicting a naked angel kissing a zephyr riding the waves.

The final race in 1931 was won by the Supermarine S6B, designed by one Reginald J Mitchell. Within five years he would design the Spitfire.

A generation earlier and the second Schneider Trophy, held in Monaco, had given Britain another trusty warbird.

The 1914 contest was won by the Sopwith Tabloid, which averaged just under 87mph on its 28 circuits.

If that sounds slow, the victor of the inaugural competition in 1913 averaged just 45mph. And all this just ten years after the Wright Brothers' first flight...

The Tabloid evolved into the Sopwith Baby, mainstay of the Royal Naval Air Service in the middle years of the Great War.

The Baby served as both fighter and bomber, the 'carrier strike fighter' of the day, conducting bombing raids on targets ashore from seaplane carriers.

The single seaters were also used as interceptors around the coast, stationed at more than half a dozen naval air stations.

It was from one such base, Calshot, that Flt Cdr Edward Albert de Lossy de Ville set off on a patrol on the morning of September 14 1917.

The forecast as he rose slowly above Southampton Water was for the morning fog to clear.

It didn't. Five minutes after take-off, at an altitude of 360ft, Edward de Ville's patrol came to an abrupt end on Horsea Island in Portsmouth Harbour.

Dominating the man-made island and its torpedo-testing lake were three 446ft lattice masts – reputedly the tallest structures in Europe at the time – to support high-power radio transmissions to and from Royal Navy vessels more than 1,000 miles away.

It looked flimsy, but supported by a sea of cables and wires, it proved to be remarkably robust – sturdy enough to withstand the impact of an object weighing three quarters

of a tonne and travelling at over 70mph.

Sailors on the ground had heard the drone of de Ville's aircraft, followed by a crash, but with the upper reaches of the mast devoured by the patchy fog, they had no firm idea of what happened.

Still AB Nicholas Rath chose to begin climbing the mast – fully aware that the impact may yet cause it to topple; the collision caused one of the supports to give way.

Equipped with rope, two more sailors volunteered to follow Rath: OS Richard Knowlton and 19-year-old deck hand George Abbott.

Eighty feet short of the mast's tip, they found the Sopwith Baby – and de Ville's unconscious body.

The force of the collision had somehow twisted the aircraft so that it was entangled in the mast, upside down.

The aviator had been catapulted out of his cockpit and first on to the biplane's lower wing... which he bounced off and landed on the upper wing.

Before his colleagues could arrive, Irishman Rath crawled out on to the wing to comfort and secure the pilot then, when his colleagues arrived, got a rope around the body so de Ville could be lifted into a bosun's chair, which had been raised inside the mast by sailors on the ground.

Once lowered, de Ville received treatment in one of the huts at the wireless station before being returned to Calshot to convalesce.

There he recounted the three ratings' exploits, exploits which would earn the trio the Albert Medal for lifesaving. For Rath, the medal was in gold; for his two colleagues, the same decoration, but in bronze.

The remains of the seaplane were eventually removed, but the kink in the mast – now unofficially named in de Ville's honour – was never repaired.

It, and its sisters, was eventually pulled down in the 1930s when smaller steel structures were erected in their place. The latter towered over the island into the 1960s.

■ These photographs (Q 70035 and, inset, Q 70034) are two of more than ten million held by the Imperial War Museum. They can be viewed or purchased at www.iwm.org.uk/collections/photographs, or by calling 0207 416 5309.



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● One of the historic cannon recovered during dredging work; part of a clay pipe was also recovered from the seabed

Wealth of artefacts found during dredging

Treasure trove

MILLIONS of metres of mud have been cleared from Portsmouth Harbour ready for the arrival of HMS Queen Elizabeth.

Specialist dredging vessels have removed 3,200,000 cubic metres of mud – the equivalent to 12,800 Olympic-sized swimming pools.

The Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) awarded a contract to Boskalis Westminster to make room for the 65,000-tonne HMS Queen Elizabeth and her sister Prince of Wales two years ago.

More than 20,000 items were recovered, from shoes to mines, many dating back several centuries.

The wealth of artefacts uncovered include eight cannon, an aircraft engine, pictured left, 36 anchors and a human skull, which was passed to the local police.

There was an arsenal of old ordnance, ranging from bullets and cannonballs to a British torpedo. A German sea mine and five large bombs were found, before being made safe by the Royal Navy's Explosive Ordnance Disposal team.

Elsewhere the dredging uncovered bottles, plates, ceramics and shoes which probably belonged to sailors. They have been passed to the project's archaeologists at Wessex Archaeology for study.

Capt Iain Greenlees, Head of



Infrastructure at HMNB Portsmouth, said: "The dredging was the culmination of 12 years' work monitoring the sea bed environment around the harbour and unearthed a huge array of items, some of which may be historically significant, and underlines again Portsmouth's long maritime history."

Philip Wise, Principal Project Manager for DIO, said: "We're delighted with the successful completion of the dredging work. It marks the conclusion of DIO's £100m infrastructure project to ready Portsmouth for HMS Queen Elizabeth, of which the dredge was only part."

Gerrit Jan van den Bosch, Project Manager for Boskalis Westminster, said: "The Boskalis Westminster team is proud of the challenging dredging project that has been safely completed prior to the arrival of HMS Queen Elizabeth.

"With good co-operation and

involvement from the Navy, DIO and other parties, we look back on a successful project."

Although the main dredging work has now been completed there will be an on-going need to remove new material that naturally settles in the channel over time. This will be achieved by maintenance dredging on a yearly basis.



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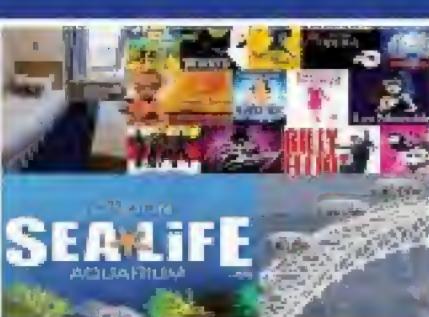
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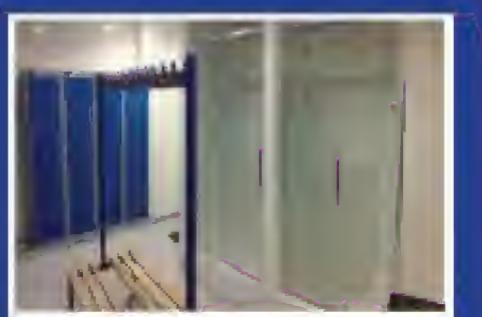
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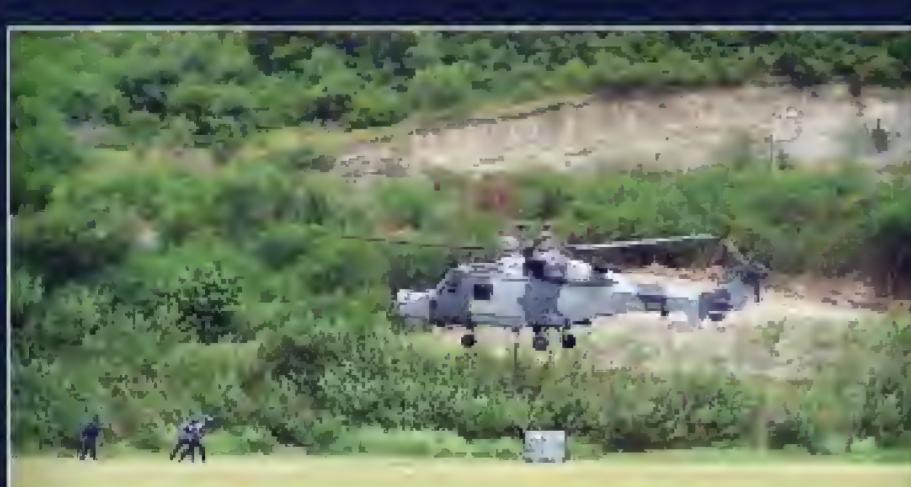
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● From top: Police vehicles are delivered by Mexeflote to Anguilla; A RHIB is landed ashore on Montserrat; Mounts Bay's Wildcat exercises with a helicopter from the Royal Anguillan Police Force; Lt Amy Gilmore marks her 1,000th flying hour with LA Kyle Mason and Capt Chris Clarke; The town of Plymouth, devastated by a volcano on Montserrat, The Wildcat practises ferrying underslung loads



Pictures: LPhot Louise George, 815 NAS and personnel from RFA Mounts Bay



Wildcat strikes out to hit drugs trade

ROYAL Navy aviators helped deal a double blow to the drugs trade during RFA Mounts Bay's Caribbean deployment.

Around 20 illegal drugs farms were spotted by the crew of the ship's Wildcat helicopter as it flew over the British Virgin Islands.

And then Lts Amy Gilmore, Oliver Bundoock and Lee Colthart took their helicopter over the potato-shaped British Overseas Territory of Montserrat – just ten miles long and six across – and also found nine suspected illegal drugs plantations.

The aircraft first flew over the town of Plymouth, 20 years after a volcano destroyed the area.

Naval aviators revisited the site of the natural disaster to see how they might help should Soufrière Hills erupt again.

Half the island was abandoned back in 1997 when the volcano erupted, mud and lava swallowed much of the Montserrat capital Plymouth and the Royal Navy was instrumental in helping to evacuate many islanders.

Two decades later and the southern half of the territory remains off limits.

Drug traffickers have ignored the warning signs and established illegal plantations in the forbidden zone.

The visit of Naval support ship RFA Mounts Bay, conducting a patrol of UK territories in the region, allowed fresh surveys of Montserrat – both to look at the state of the southern half of the island and, with police embarked, to hunt for drugs plantations.

Aircrew took Governor Elizabeth Carriere and some of her officials up in the Wildcat for an inspection of the island, then did the same with local police, who guided the helicopter to suspected drug hotspots. They found nine sites – including the largest plantation ever seen from the air, near Dick Hill in the still-inhabited part of the island – which will now be destroyed by the authorities.

The helicopter also scouted possible landing sites and practised ferrying a tonne of water in a large cube slung beneath the Wildcat – all vital practice should Mounts Bay and her aircraft be called upon to assist islanders if there's another eruption, or a hurricane whips through Montserrat.

The previous month the helicopter flew over the British Virgin Islands archipelago to help local authorities tackle the drugs menace and keep an eye on boats thought to be gun running.

The combination of the sensors fitted on the helicopter and the sharp eyes

of crew and personnel from the Royal Virgin Islands Police Force located four marijuana farms on Virgin Gorda – the third largest island in the chain – then 15 illegal sites growing the same drug on Tortola.

"The use of Wildcat is a fantastic example of how just two hours of focused work can bring some real value to the community," said Capt Chris Clarke RFA, Mounts Bay's Commanding Officer.

As well as weighing into the war on drugs during the visit to the islands, representatives of the disaster-relief team met their local counterparts to prepare for the hurricane season.

"It's important to be here at this time of the year to make sure that we can make the necessary contacts with key officials so that in times of crisis – be it a hurricane or some other disaster in the area – we can assist in any way the government agencies wish to use us," Capt Clarke added.

The visit to Montserrat also saw the ship deliver an Atlantic 74 rigid hull semi-inflatable boat to the island's marine unit.

Sgt John Rolfe of 1 Assault Squadron Royal Marines had special interest in the handover as he had worked on the boat over previous weeks to fit the new outboard engines, a new set of navigational aids and to ensure the RHIB was ready for the handover.

"The crew of Mounts Bay, which includes the RFA, RLC, RM and Royal Navy personnel are pleased to hand over the RHIB to the people of Montserrat," he said.

One of Mounts Bay's first ports of call in the Caribbean was the island of Anguilla, where personnel took part in a disaster-relief exercise, visited local schools and carried out helicopter operations with the Royal Anguillan Police Force.

During the visit the ship also handed over two police vehicles and assorted specialist protection equipment to the RAPF. The refurbished vehicles, previously used by the Sussex Police, were transported from the UK, at considerable cost saving, following agreement between the Governor's Office, Foreign and Commonwealth Office and UK Ministry of Defence. The Police Commissioner and Governor were on hand to witness the delivery.

A lot of hard work led to some celebrating on Mounts Bay as personnel marked a milestone in the career of helicopter commander Lt Gilmore.

The Flight Commander and observer – navigator/sensors and weapons systems expert – of the Wildcat lashed to the flight

deck of RFA Mounts Bay passed 1,000 flying hours in the service of her country.

She's in charge of the helicopter, normally based at 815 NAS in Yeovil, and the team of mechanics, technicians and controllers who look after the Wildcat when on board and monitor and guide sorties when airborne.

Amy originally joined the Royal Navy as a warfare officer, before switching to the Fleet Air Arm in 2013. After completing her observer training, she notched up more than 700 hours in the Wildcat's predecessor, Lynx, including a deployment to the South Atlantic with HMS Dragon, then converted to the new helicopter.

"It's a real privilege to have been able to fly these fantastic aircraft over the last six years – 1,000 hours is a very special achievement to me," she said.

"I'm pleased I've managed to clock it up whilst at sea on a great ship, on an operational deployment, doing what we do best."

Celebrating with Lt Gilmore was Leading Airman Kyle Mason, who has just qualified as a Flight Deck Officer – in charge of the safe operating of the Wildcat, from take-off and landings, to refuelling and tying the helicopter firmly to the deck – and Capt Clarke.

Mounts Bay relieved tanker RFA Wave Knight as Britain's patrol ship in the region, on stand-by to provide assistance in the wake of a hurricane, reassuring residents of UK overseas territories and supporting the international struggle against drug trafficking.

She brought with her an interesting and unusual cargo including; the Wildcat helicopter, an Army detachment from the Royal Logistics Corp Port and Maritime Regiment, and a detachment of engineers from 24 Commando Royal Engineers. She also carries tractors, diggers, trucks, quad bikes, command and all-terrain vehicles.

Officer Commanding Royal Engineer Regiment detachment, Lt Oli Fletcher, said: "This small detachment of 19 people is full of useful skill-sets in times of need. Plumbers, fitters, joiners, mechanics and plant operators provide a wide range of potential options to the disaster management team in that first 24-48 hours following a disaster."

Lt Louise Tester, OC of the Army Royal Logistic Corps detachment added: "Using the highly-versatile Mexeflote raft we are able to transfer equipment, personnel, stores and vehicles from the ship to the shore in circumstances where normal shore infrastructure is unavailable."



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● HMS Archer inboard of Smiler (P272) with Ranger (P293) outboard of Exploit among the German and international ships open to visitors at Kiel Week

Djiboutilicious tour for P2000

DID you hear the one about the ship which travelled to Djibouti in high summer but never endured temperatures outside the 20s Celsius?

True story – although HMS Archer didn't actually make it as far as the African nation. She just covered the respective distance from her home in Leith during four months away.

In two deployments giving students from universities on the Forth an extended insight into life in the RN, the small patrol boat took part in the world's greatest yachting event, weighed into a NATO exercise, joined all her P2000 sisters in the Solent for a rare get-together, trained with German naval cadets, honoured a WW1 VC hero, buzzed Britain's new carriers, squeezed down the Caledonian Canal and gave Sea Cadets a taste of life at sea.

Not bad for a 21-metre craft with a limited range, a crew of just five, plus a dozen undergraduates.

The first of 14 university boats, Archer travelled 6,000 miles, visiting 45 different ports and six countries since casting off from Leith in April.

The highlight of her four-month double deployment was joining three other P2000s (Exploit, Ranger and Smiler) harassing much larger NATO warships during this year's Baltops war games.

That two-week workout was followed by a change of pace in Kiel and the world's most famous yachting regatta, which is also attended by warships from around the world.

Around 400 Germans took the chance for a brief look around Archer (there are little more than half a dozen compartments and cabins in the patrol boats) before the boat hopped around the Schleswig-Holstein coast in company with Smiler to visit the German Navy's counterpart to Dartmouth, Mürwik Marineschule – the first ever visit by P2000s.

"It was brilliant to meet cadets from the German Navy," said OC Matt Asbirdge, a history student at the University of Edinburgh. "It was especially interesting to hear the history of the college, from its establishment under Kaiser Wilhelm II to present day."

Returning to Leith in mid-July, Archer then headed out for an eight-day Highlands cruise: a trip down the Caledonian Canal, two days on Loch Ness taking potential recruits (Sea Cadets and Sea Scouts) to sea (well, lake).

"Having spent much of the summer being dwarfed by larger warships and merchant vessels, it was a novelty to experience being the biggest fish in the pond," said Archer's CO Lt Charles Stevenson.

But not for long. Upon reaching the Moray Firth, Archer became the minnow again. And how – as she encountered HMS Queen Elizabeth undergoing sea trials, buzzed by a Merlin and Typhoon jets.

Archer then moved along the coast to the small port of Buckie to represent the Royal Navy at the unveiling of a memorial stone for Pte George McIntosh VC, who fought at Passchendaele.

The journey back home saw more Sea Cadets embarked from Peterhead and Stonehaven (pictured below enjoying themselves). Archer spent the night in the latter fishing port, which is the boat's affiliated town.

"The deployment has been extremely varied and a great training experience – from the chance to operate with NATO allies in an unfamiliar environment in the Baltic, to URNU training and visiting cities such as Hamburg, Copenhagen, Antwerp and Amsterdam, the squadron has thoroughly demonstrated its value and flexibility," said Sub Lt James Waldron, attached to Archer as an additional watchkeeper.

Having spent so much time away from home waters, Archer is now back in her usual area of operations on the Scottish east coast, ready for a fresh influx of students as a new university year begins.



● Protector's Guard of Honour forms up during an evening reception in Walvis Bay, Namibia, attended by local dignitaries, the British ex-pat community and British High Commissioner Jo Lomas

Just desert for ice ship's crew

ICEBREAKER HMS Protector is gearing up for a return to the frozen wastes of Antarctica after making new friends in Africa over the austral winter.

Even around the much milder Antarctic Peninsula – the ship's usual 'playground' – temperatures are far below zero.

Couple that with short days and bad weather, and there's nothing to be gained from survey and scientific work on the frozen continent, prompting Protector to either head for home in Plymouth... or wait for spring's return by ploughing up and down the west coast of Africa.

For the past two Southern Hemisphere winters she's done the latter, using Cape Town as a maintenance base and exchanging one third of the ship's company every few weeks to sustain a two-and-a-half-year deployment (the red and white icebreaker won't see her native Devonport until spring 2018).

The two austral winters in Africa have allowed the ship to make friends in places the RN, let alone an Antarctic survey ship, only infrequently calls in on.

Last month we caught up with Protector in Ghana, training local authorities in the art of board and search operations.

This month, the ship has moved 2,000 miles south to Namibia, collecting survey data as she went.

Protector is fitted with an array of specialist equipment for work in Antarctica – but much of this can be used equally well outside of the Antarctic Circle, chiefly her Multi-Beam Echo Sounder – a sophisticated 'pencil beam' sonar which builds a highly-accurate 3D



representation of the sea bed.

Normally it's used to survey and safely navigate the poorly-charted waters of the Antarctic Peninsula, but this adaptable piece of equipment is also very adept at surveying the ocean floor in more temperate waters.

The ship has surveyed almost the entire length of the West African coast as far as the 'bump' – amounting to about 18,000 square kilometres (6,950 square miles or about five times the size of Cornwall) of soundings.

The data gathered will be fed back to the UK Hydrographic Office in Taunton to allow it to update the charts used by many of the world's mariners around the world and improve navigational safety in the region.

Namibia is the self-proclaimed desert 'Extreme Sports Capital of the World' so a few days in Walvis Bay allowed the crew

to let their hair down – after the formalities of an ambassador's lunch and capability demonstration for a sizeable contingent of the local UK ex-pat community.

Sailors and marines headed out into the sands to get their adrenaline fix: dune bashing on quad bikes; sandboarding (more accurately: sliding down sand dunes on a polished piece of MDF).

For those after a more tranquil experience, Walvis Bay was also home to a whole host of wildlife and the wardroom took a leisurely morning kayak out into the bay to see the flamingos and get up close and personal to the local seal population, who were more than happy to entertain their guests.

The week of low and high-octane activities in Namibia culminated in the Protector Grand Prix, with representatives from all three messes competing for the go-karting podium and the ubiquitous bottle of cheap bubbly.

Joining race winner and logistics officer Lt Cdr Charlie Carver on that podium was CPO(SR) Kerry Collins, not as runner-up... but as the karter who posted the slowest lap time of the day.

"It's been a busy period for Protector, operating away from her more usual environment," said Lt Cdr Carver.

"With spring now approaching in the Southern Hemisphere it is time for her to make an about-turn and head away from deserts and dunes of West Africa and, after a short period of Operational Sea Training, back to the natural habitat of an icebreaker."

Recalling the mud and blood of Passchendaele

ROYAL Marines musicians move through a sea of gravestones at the largest British military cemetery in the world for the start of centennial commemorations of the worst battle in the nation's history.

Nearly 12,000 Commonwealth Servicemen are at rest here. This is Tyne Cot, on the southwestern edge of the village which gave the Third Battle of Ypres its popular name: Passchendaele.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission cemetery was the venue for the second day of international events marking the beginning of the 1917 battle which has come to symbolise the tremendous slaughter and apparent futility of the Great War.

Not two miles from this spot sailors and Royal Marines fought in the final stages of the battle – Third Ypres ran from the end of July until mid-November – slogging their way through mud, craters and ruins of farms towards the offensive's final objective: the village of Passchendaele and, above all, the ridge on which it was located.

In ten days of fighting, the sailor-soldiers of the Royal Naval Division advanced at best 1,200



yards, at worst perhaps just 300. Some of the division's battalions suffered 50 per cent casualties.

Nineteen of those dead sailors are buried at Tyne Cot; there are more here, but their bodies were never identified, their headstones marked: A seaman of the Great War. Known unto God.

Britain's military and political leaders – including Prime Minister Theresa May and First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Philip Jones – joined Prince Charles and the Duke and Duchess

stories brought to life during the ceremony.

After the service, Col Jeff Moulton, Deputy Commander Maritime Reserves, was asked by the family of Pte Harold Thomson, a 19-year-old Royal Marine who fought with the RM Light Infantry, to lay a wreath in memory of their great uncle.

Neil Trinder and his sister Karen Dewdney, a former Wren from Birmingham, travelled to Belgium to pay their respects to their Uncle Harold, whom they had never met but who held a strong place in their hearts for. Killed on October 26 1917, he was one of nearly 500,000 fallen on both sides of the barbed wire.

Ahead of events at Tyne Cot, the nearby town of Ypres hosted the first day of commemorations, firstly with the traditional Last Post ceremony at the Menin Gate – the massive memorial to the missing on the eastern edge of the town centre – followed by a multimedia performance recounting the four years of fighting in the Belgian salient, using the stunning rebuilt Cloth Hall – symbol of Ypres and destroyed in WW1 – as its backdrop.

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● Lt Col Gary Green explains the exploits of his fellow Royal Marines during the 1664 Challenge to the Duke of Edinburgh, followed by First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Philip Jones

Duke's long reign ends in the rain

IT WASN'T some great act of state, some national event celebrated with all the pomp and splendour associated with Britain's long and proud history, which saw the Duke of Edinburgh take his bow on the public stage.

No the very last of the 96-year-old royal's 22,219 solo public engagements, was played out on a very wet forecourt of Buckingham Palace in front of Royal Marines past and present. And the Band of HM Royal Marines Plymouth (ok, so there was some pomp and splendour).

The nonagenarian's final duty before retiring from the Royal rota – he will continue to accompany the Queen at some public events and occasions – was as Captain General of the Corps, receiving scores of commandos as they completed a nationwide fundraising challenge.

One in four Royal Marines volunteered for the 1664 Challenge – to collectively complete 1,664 miles on foot, in the pool, on a bike or by some other form of strenuous physical exercise, ending with the final group of participants running into the grounds of Buckingham Palace 100 days later.

Not everyone chose a 'simple' challenge: one officer chose to run 100km inside 12 hours, one company of commandos chose to lift the weight of HMS Ocean – 21,000 tonnes – and ran 10km inside 20 days, while another group swam 34 miles under water.

And then there were Cpl Will



● Prince Philip meets members of the Royal Marines Association braving the rain while (below) the RM Guard of Honour salutes its Captain General



Gingell and Jamie Thompson who ran all 1,664 miles for the RM Charity.

Guided by Corps Colonel Lt Col Gary Green, Prince Philip met various challengers and, when told of the lengths some had gone to, quipped in

characteristic fashion that they ought to be locked up...

"We've had some brilliant support from all the runners along the way," said Jamie. "It's been a team effort from a lot of the Corps and we cannot thank them enough for getting us

here to Buckingham Palace and meeting the Captain General. It's been a hoofing experience and a hoofing day."

His Royal Highness also spoke with Royal Marines veterans and cadets and received the 1664 Global Challenge Baton. The parade concluded with a march past and three cheers for the Captain General, who doffed his hat in acknowledgment.

Will added: "It's been a great challenge and a life-changing experience. The first 50 days were the hardest and some days it was difficult to get started but we were together and once we got back on the running, we pulled each other through."

Their mega-marathon accounted for just 100 of the 23,438 days the Duke served as Captain General of the Corps; the title was a Coronation gift from the Queen to her husband, who succeeded King George VI in the role.

In that capacity, Prince Philip has visited the Corps – and broader Corps family – at home and abroad. In the past year alone, he has spent time with the Royal Marines in London, Portsmouth and Plymouth.

The Captain General's Parade brings to a close His Royal Highness's individual programme, although he may choose to attend certain events, alongside the Queen, from time to time.

"It was a fantastic – and historic – day for the Royal Marines," said Lt Col Green. "Being on parade for the Captain General at his final parade is a very memorable occasion for everyone present."



● A Royal Marines bugler sounds the Last Post at the RN Patrol Service Memorial in Lowestoft as Thomas Crisp VC is honoured

WW1 sub-hunting heroes honoured

SAILORS, cadets, and Royal Marines past and present gathered in Dorset and Suffolk to honour WW1 heroes who took the fight to German submarines.

Ernest Pitcher and Thomas Crisp were both crew of Q ships – specially-modified merchantmen bristling with weaponry, designed to lure U-boats to their doom.

Their gallantry in August 1917 earned them the nation's highest military honour, the Victoria Cross – in Crisp's case, posthumously – and, a century on from their deeds, a memorial paving stone.

Poole and District Royal Marines Association organised a service at St Mary's Church in Swanage for Ernest Pitcher.

The 30-year-old petty officer (painted, above right, by Ambrose McEvey, in 1918/IWM ART 1327) had already received the DSM and been Mentioned in Dispatches twice ahead of the fatal action.

HMS Dunraven was patrolling the Bay of Biscay on August 8 1917 when she was attacked by UC-71.

A shell from the submarine's deck gun struck the ship's poop deck where Pitcher's 4in gun was disguised by a fake hatch and aphony laundry line.

The shell set off a hidden depth charge. Smoke obscured the hidden gun's viewing ports, while the resulting fire threatened to set off a magazine below; sailors threw ammunition off the burning deck.

Before they could spring their trap, however, a shell struck the poop deck and blew it sky-high.

Despite the devastation, the gun crew survived, but Pitcher cartwheeled through the air and landed near the engine room, sustaining wounds in several places. Dunraven's skipper decided to fight to the death with UC-71 – and lost. The Q-ship was torpedoed and sank 36 hours later.

Pitcher received the VC as a representative of the 4in gun crew; his comrades all received Conspicuous Gallantry Medals.

All VC winners with connections to the UK are being honoured with memorial paving stones in their hometowns as part of national Great War centennial commemorations.

"It really is a great honour for the family, that granddad is remembered for his heroic actions," said Steve Sargeant, who lives in Lyme Regis. "I remember him, although I was very young during World War 2. He used to come home from being at sea and always have time for everyone. I missed him when he died."

Pitcher served until 1927, retiring as a CPO. He taught woodwork at a boys' school in Swanage and also ran a pub, then rejoined the RN in 1939, serving at the Coastal Forces base, HMS Attack, in Portland. He died in February 1946.



Like the Dunraven, Thomas Crisp's armed smack Nelson was also sunk in its encounter with the Germans. Unlike Pitcher, Crisp did not survive.

At the age of 39, the fisherman had volunteered for the RNR and was given command of an armed smack, I'll Try (later renamed Nelson). He'd already received the Distinguished Service Cross for the probable sinking of a U-boat back in February 1917.

That summer Crisp was given command of a small submarine-hunting pack – two armed smacks – and sailed into the North Sea.

On August 17, Crisp sighted a U-boat on the surface and the two vessels engaged in a gunnery duel – with Nelson's three pounder proving no match for the submarine's more powerful 88mm deck gun.

Thomas Crisp was fatally wounded, but continued to give orders to his men before ordering them to abandon ship. With no radio, he dispatched carrier pigeons with his final signal: Nelson being attacked by submarine. Skipper killed. Jim Howe Bank. Send assistance at once.

As Nelson sank and its survivors – including Crisp's son, also called Thomas – took to a lifeboat, the second smack, Ethel & Millie, continued the fight against the submarine. Neither the boat nor any of its seven crew were ever seen again.

A century later and a memorial paving stone was dedicated at the RN Patrol Service Memorial – the WW2 monument to minelayer and anti-submarine crews, many of whom were former fishermen – in the presence of veterans, civic leaders and sailors from the RN's regional command.

"Despite huge social and economic change over the past 100 years, certain things that we are reminded of today have remained the same," said Cdre David Elford, Naval Regional Commander for Eastern England.

"Maritime trade remains the lifeblood of our country, and this was especially true during World War 1."

"Thomas Crisp, and those like him, met their fate with a supreme sense of duty and they bore their hardships and dangers with enormous fortitude."

A game of Catt and mouse

KEEPING a watchful eye on the movements of a Russian submarine as it sails on the surface of the Channel is HMS Cattistock.

The minelayer shepherded not one but two Kilo-class boats – plus their support tug – past the UK, assisted by a more traditional submarine hunter, a Merlin Mk2 of 814 NAS.

The Portsmouth-based warship met up with the Russians in the North Sea, taking over from a NATO task group which had monitored the small task group's progress so far, leaving it to the Brits to accompany the boats and their Sliva-class support tug through the Channel.

"It was great to put my photography skills to the test on an operation not normally associated with the mine warfare branch," said warfare rating/ship's photographer AB(MW) Andrew Gardner. "It was my first time seeing a Kilo-class submarine and then, like buses, two came along at once!"

Cattistock's new Commanding Officer, Lt Cdr Paul Irving, was impressed with the way his team adapted to the mission: "Although my crew are primarily experts in mine warfare, everyone pulled together to focus our efforts on achieving one of the Royal Navy's core roles: conducting Maritime Security Operations in UK waters. That's one of the best things about this job – every day brings a different challenge."





Dunning's deed remembered 100 years on

A MERLIN Mk2 helicopter landed and took off from the flight deck of HMS Queen Elizabeth to mark the centenary of the first aircraft landing on a moving ship at sea.

On a clear but windy day at Scapa Flow, pilots Lt Greg Weal and Lt Nick Allen flew their 14-tonne helicopter on to the carrier's four-acre flight deck (pictured above by LPhot Pepe Hogan). The men from 820 Naval Air Squadron then took off for a flypast.

The flight was one of several acts of commemoration to mark Sqn Cdr Edwin Dunning's landing on the flight deck of HMS Furious at Scapa Flow on August 2 1917.

Dunning, 25, a member of the Royal Naval Air Service, launched his Sopwith Pup from the carrier, then flew around in a circuit as the ship steamed some 26 knots into the 11 knot wind.

He lined up on finals and 'blipped' his engine to slow his approach. The deck crews gathered under his aircraft and successfully hauled him to the deck.

Dunning attempted to repeat the feat five days later but his engine failed and his aircraft toppled into the sea and he drowned.

The young aviator was buried at St Lawrence's Church in Bradfield, Essex, where a memorial tablet acknowledges the debt the Admiralty owed to his pioneering work.

Push to raise money for landing craft

CAN you help save one of the iconic vessels which helped propel Royal Marines to victory in the Falklands 35 years ago?

Foxtrot 7 is one of the few – if not only – landing craft left from the South Atlantic conflict, used to ferry Royal Marines and the Parachute Regiment from HMS Fearless to shore at San Carlos in the liberation of the islands.

The craft – which could carry up to 35 fully-equipped troops or two Land Rovers – rescued 41 crew from HMS Antelope when the frigate was bombed, earning F7's coxswain Cpl Alan White a commendation for his bravery.

As with her three sisters from Fearless, the small landing craft was used extensively until the end of the war, moving men and supplies about and even supporting mine clearance operations. The larger Foxtrot 4, which also helped evacuate men from Antelope, was destroyed by Argentine aircraft, killing six crew.

After 21 years' service F7 was donated to the Royal Marines Museum in 1986, where she's been on display as a reminder of the Falklands conflict.

With the museum relocating from Eastney to Portsmouth Historic Dockyard, the craft needs moving; it's intended to be one of two million naval objects and artefacts on show in a revamped museum complex, and will form a centrepiece of the new RM Museum.

There's just one problem: it needs £25,000 conservation work; the boat is 52 years old and the elements have taken their toll during the three decades F7 has been on display in Eastney.

A short crowdfunding drive by the National Museum of the Royal Navy kick-started the campaign, bringing in £1,600 in ten days.

Naval divers help historians recover the original bouncing bomb as they get their eyeball on Highball

THIS was once the most advanced weapon in the world – designed to sink Hitler's flagship.

Raised from the bed of a Scottish loch by civilian and Royal Navy divers, this is Highball – sister of the legendary 'bouncing bomb' used in the Dambusters raid – intended for use against the most powerful warship in Europe: battleship Tirpitz.

Seventy-four years ago RAF Mosquito bombers flew up and down remote Loch Striven, 30 miles west of Glasgow, attempting to 'sink' an old French battleship with a bomb which would 'skip' over anti-torpedo nets and then explode against the hull.

Crews were given just two months to prepare for Operation Servant, codename for the Highball attack on the Tirpitz in a fjord near Trondheim – one half of a planned double-blow against the Third Reich with the dams raid (Operation Chastise) intended to take place inside the same 24 hours.

It was never used in anger. Although RAF 618 Squadron was shipped out to Australia with the intention of using the bouncing bombs, which were dropped in pairs at low level about a second apart, against the Imperial Japanese Navy, it never came to pass.

Highball's inventor, Sir Barnes Wallis, continued to tweak his weapon, convinced of its use against shipping; as many as 200 dummy variants of the mostly-spherical bombs are believed to lie on the bed of the loch – testing continued well into 1944.

And Tirpitz was crippled by attacks by midget submarines and Fleet Air Arm and RAF



One of the recovered Highball prototypes is lowered on to the deck of diving support vessel SD Moorfowl

Picture: LPhot Will Haigh

raids until she was finally sunk in November 1944 by Lancaster bombers carrying giant Tallboy bombs – also designed by Barnes Wallis.

Nevertheless, Dundee University lecturer Dr Iain Murray, author of *Bouncing-Bomb Man: the science*

of Sir Barnes Wallis, was determined Highball should have its place in history – and has spent the past decade looking to raise some of the dummy bombs (known as 'stores' by the men who dropped them) from the bottom of Loch Striven.

Expert Royal Navy divers from Northern Diving Group in Faslane were first contacted about supporting the initiative back in 2015 – Highballs are similar in size and weight to the classic 'spiked' mine.

They joined a team from the British Sub-Aqua Club for a week-long operation – aptly codenamed 'Barnes Wallis' – to raise several Highballs from the depths 180ft below.

Specialist lifting equipment was attached to the divers' work boat and once hauled out of the water, the Highballs were moved to shore and placed in tanks filled with a salt solution to prevent corrosion.

"It was a privilege to be part of this dive," said CPO Gareth Spence, who led the Northern Diving Group team in the loch.

"Not only was it a useful training exercise, but it gave us a tremendous sense of satisfaction knowing that we have played a part in helping to preserve these important pieces of our wartime history."

"We deal with dozens of items of wartime ordnance around the country each year, but raising the Highball bombs has been a real highlight."

Even more delighted was Dr Murray, watching his long-term ambition realised.

"The bouncing bomb is probably the most legendary weapon in the British military arsenal, and this particular example of Highball is the only one we don't have on display to the public, so we're filling that final gap," he said.

Once they've undergone treatment to conserve them after 74 years on the seabed, some of the recovered Highballs will go on display at the de Havilland Aircraft Museum in Hertfordshire – the firm built the Mosquito – and the Brooklands Museum in Surrey, birthplace of British motoring and aviation.

'...No man wanted to show he was afraid...'

THE sight of Highballs lifted from the bed of Loch Striven after seven decades stirred the memory of Flt Lt Des Curtis DFC – for he dropped a good number of them.

As a 19-year-old navigator he made numerous low-level runs over the loch, launching the bouncing bombs against aged warships – first the old French battleship Courbet, later the battle-worn dreadnaught HMS Malaya.

At 94, he is probably one of the last survivors of top-secret 618 squadron. Formed in the spring of 1943, it was given just six to eight weeks to prepare for its mission: sink the Tirpitz.

Hitler's battleship – sister of the Bismarck – was being held in a fjord near Trondheim to prevent a British invasion of Norway and potentially strike at Allied convoys to Russia.

There was no warship in the Royal Navy which was a match for Tirpitz on its own – which was where inventor Barnes Wallis came in.

He devised a bomb which would skip over defences – such as anti-torpedo netting – strike the side of the target and detonate at a set depth to cause maximum damage. It could be used against ships at anchor or dams.

It took more than a year for the inventor to turn his idea into a working reality.

618 was formed in the strictest secrecy. Neither unit knew the other's objective and personnel were forbidden not merely from talking to friends and family, but even squadron comrades; engineers had no idea what the fliers were preparing for, or why they were making modifications



A very rare photograph of a modified 618 Squadron Mosquito carrying two Highballs

to the Mosquito bombers.

"We were isolated from the rest of the world," Mr Curtis, who lives in Westbourne in Dorset, remembers.

The Mosquitos' bomb bays were altered to carry two Highballs – each weighing about 580kg and spun backwards at several hundred RPM before release – which would be dropped one second apart.

Homes on both sides of Loch Striven were emptied of inhabitants as the twin-engine wooden bombers made their attack runs against a

stationary warship.

The Mosquitos raced down the loch at speeds of nearly 360mph, flying at 30 to 50 feet above the water and releasing the prototype Highballs between 1,000 and 1,400 yards from their targets.

Attacking the Tirpitz was a daunting prospect.

"No man wanted to die," Mr Curtis recalls, "but no

man wanted to show he was afraid for fear of being taken off the mission. Everyone buttoned up and took it in their stride, but really we were scared witless.

"Luckily we never saw a letter from the Under Secretary of State at Air Ministry in which it was said that it would involve the acceptance of the possible loss of all aircraft."

As it was trials with Highball did not go as well as with the larger cylindrical Upkeep bomb planned for use against dams on the Ruhr. That attack went ahead on the night of May 16-17 1943.

"The first we knew of the dams raid was when it was announced on the news. Everything had been dependent on the water levels in the dams, with both missions taking place within a 24-hour period," said Mr Curtis.

There was no follow-up raid on Tirpitz, however, which was soon moved from Trondheim to the Arctic Circle – beyond the range of a round trip by Mosquitos.

Nevertheless, Highball training continued.

"The weapon was fine in still water. But some started to wobble in the spindle and if they struck the highest part of a rising wave, the bomb would bounce erratically and could possibly take your tail off," the former navigator recalled.

"In the right conditions, it would have been a good weapon, but there were too many barriers, too much secrecy, too many variables."

HMS Malaya provided some proof that Highball might have worked when everything fell into place; one bomb penetrated the battleship's armour and penetrated as far as the admiral's pantry.



Divers' ten-month expedition to wreck of HMS Vanguard unlocks the Secrets of the deep



THIS is all that is left of HMS Vanguard – the Royal Navy's worst disaster in the Great War away from the field of battle.

Scattered across the bed of Scapa Flow – the wartime anchorage of the Fleet in Orkney – are sections and twisted metal from the battleship, which came through the Battle of Jutland unscathed... only to blow up a year later, killing all but two of her 845 crew.

A tenth-month survey of the once mighty dreadnaught's wreck has largely confirmed the findings of the original inquiry – and dismissed at least one urban myth associated with the cataclysmic explosion for the past century.

As part of centennial commemorations of the warship's loss, ceremonies were held over the wreck site and in Kirkwall's imposing St Magnus' Cathedral.

But the anniversary also prompted a ten-month study of the wreck – authorised by Whitehall, for Vanguard is a war grave and no one may visit her without permission.

The Vanguard 100 team spent the winter and spring making use of the latest diving technology – from side-scan sonar to photogrammetry – to produce 3D models of sections of the wreck, in addition to capturing traditional photos and video footage of the remains of the ship during 400 hours beneath the waves.

After a day's exercising with the Grand Fleet, HMS Vanguard had returned to anchor on the evening of July 9 1917. All was normal until 11.20pm when the vast natural harbour was rocked by a series of tremendous explosions.

As a huge smoke cloud enveloped the men o'war, fragments of steel and debris began to rain down. Recognition signals flashed through the night. Only HMS Vanguard failed to respond, prompting the other ships to launch their boats in the hope of rescuing survivors. Only two men were found.

To find out what caused the catastrophe – and discover what remained of Vanguard – the divers were surprised to find that much of the ship lies in the same position as she was in 1917, including the intact bow and stern.

But the battleship's midships section has been torn apart, and debris scattered widely across the sea bed.

Warfare officer Lt Jen Smith, the only military person on the civilian dive team, visited Vanguard for the first time in October last year.

"The memory of seeing her majestic bow rising up from the seabed will remain in my mind forever," she says.

"We discovered that the bow and the stern are almost intact, and are lying in their relative positions to the ship's layout.

"By contrast, at first it appeared the central section was just a disarray of twisted metal, but, over time, the team were able to identify features such as boilers, turbines and specific areas of the ship's hull and decks, which they were able to identify using the original ship's plans."

One long-standing legend was that the explosion ripped a twin 12in gun turret from its mountings and hurled it through the air, landing on the isle of Flotta, one mile away.

Not so says Lt Smith the divers found all five turrets... though not necessarily where expected.

"There have always been rumours that one of the main gun turrets landed on the nearby island of Flotta, but the team located all five turrets on the wreck site, so this must be incorrect.

"Three of the turrets are a significant distance from where they should be, and other large sections now lie well outside the original ship's dimensions, indicating just how colossal the explosion was."

Among the last acts of the survey was recovering the White Ensign 'raised' over the wreck back in 2009 and replaced eight years later by the RN's Northern Diving Group, who presented the old banner to the people of Orkney.

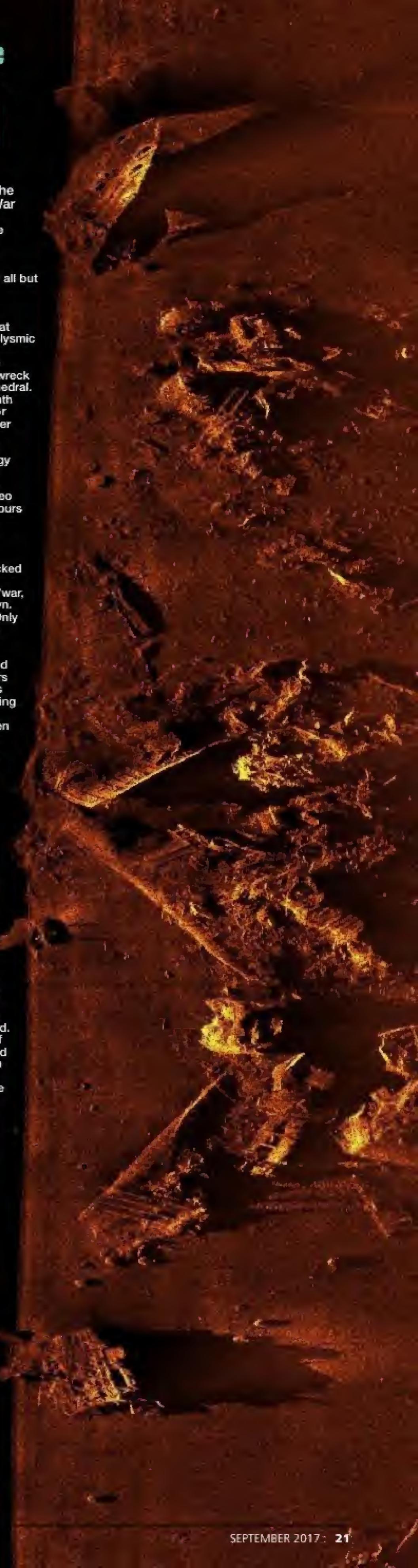
Whilst the exact cause of the disaster could not be confirmed 100 per cent, the Court of Inquiry attributed the tragedy to an internal explosion of faulty cordite thought to be in either P or Q magazines – which fed the two midship turrets.

"Every hour spent underwater contributed something and the collective contribution from our team effort has been amazing," said Emily Turton of MV Huskyan, who organised the extensive expedition.

"The data gathered by the team has provided a clear picture of the layout of the site, and has allowed the wider community – including descendants of the men lost in the tragedy – a chance to see Vanguard as she now looks after 100 years underwater.

"As you can imagine, there is a huge amount of data to process, but we hope to have a full report of the survey published later this year."

Pictures: Bob Anderson, Marjo Tynkkynen, Vanguard 100 Expedition





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● Rear-Admiral John Weale with First Sea Lord, Admiral Sir Philip Jones, POAET Mark Thompson with a replica of an F-35B jet



Pictures: LPhot Will Haigh



● Watched by cox'n AB(Sea) Stephen Rogers, Lt Cdr Bob Hawkins (left) leads a short act of remembrance over the Royal Oak with Nathan Logan and (right) LA Justin Charles

Navy are kings of the castle

THE ROYAL Navy was the focus of the Edinburgh Military Tattoo to mark the year of the new aircraft carriers.

The 68th season of the spectacle coincided with the arrival in Portsmouth of HMS Queen Elizabeth and came before the official naming of HMS Prince of Wales.

First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Philip Jones joined Flag Officer Scotland and Northern Ireland Rear Admiral John Weale in welcoming the Duke of Rothesay and the Earl of Strathearn – the official titles of the Prince of Wales and Duke of Cambridge north of the border – to Edinburgh Castle, the first time either royal has attended the event.

The tattoo opened in traditional style with a toast to good health, given in Gaelic, with a dram of ten-year-old Glenkinchie whisky.

A cast of more than 1,200 people from across the globe performed at the castle, including more than 250 pipers and drummers, five UK military bands and the event's first Japanese act, as well as major contingents from France, India and the United States.

The show's finale sees the Esplanade transformed into an aircraft carrier flight deck and a CGI projection onto the Castle walls of an aircraft taking off from the deck. As the audience arrived they walked under a life-sized model of the new F-35B fighter, with Royal Navy personnel providing a warm welcome.

Hundreds of sailors and marines took part in the event, which ran throughout August.

The Royal Navy was represented by the Massed Bands of HM Royal Marines (Portsmouth, Scotland and Commando Training Centre), a 24-strong guard of honour and a 90-strong Royal Navy and Royal Marines Tattoo Support Group,



● AB Charlotte Vowles, of HMS Queen Elizabeth, delivers the whisky to the Royal party at Edinburgh

which oversaw arrangements for the involvement of the UK Armed Forces.

The final week of the tattoo saw Type 23 frigate HMS Somerset berth in Leith and host a number of capability demonstrations.

"It was a great privilege to take command of the support group for the preparations and performance of the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo," said Lt Cdr Griffiths, one of the submariners from HM Naval Base Clyde.

"The Duke of Cambridge was delighted to meet the Royal Navy participants at the Tattoo. We discussed the show's context and how the theme reflected the arrival of HMS Queen Elizabeth in Portsmouth.

Second in command of the Tattoo

Support Group was Surg Lt Deona Chan, who also acted as guard officer for the six Royal Navy-themed nights as well as donning period costume for scenes from the Jacobite Risings.

"I did theatre when I was 15 and really enjoyed it but gave it up for my exams, so it's really nice to experience performing again," said Surg Lt Chan, 34, who was born in Hong Kong but moved to Edinburgh with her family when she was 15.

The General Duty Medical Officer, based at Permanent Joint Headquarters in Northwood, added: "It's bittersweet for me however as, when I was 16, I had the chance to go to the tattoo because my friend's dad had a spare ticket but I turned it down because it was a school night. When I found out I would be part of the tattoo, I really wanted to tell him but he died a few years ago. I think he would have been really proud and I think of him when I perform."

It's a far cry from her normal role within the Medical Branch, which, in 2006 saw her deployed to Camp Bastion in Afghanistan, two years after joining the Service. "There were big challenges," she said. "Dealing with very serious injuries and sometimes mass casualties was a steep learning curve."

The former St Serfs School, Haymarket, pupil has also cared for personnel on HMS Scott and RFA Lyme Bay.

Surg Lt Chan left the Navy in 2007 to study at Dundee University, where she achieved Masters Degrees in medicine, anatomy and anthropology plus a PhD before re-joining as planned in 2009.

"I really like the way of life in the Navy and can't imagine not being in the Navy."

The tattoo has sold out for the last 18 years, meaning each season it is seen by 220,000 visitors, the equivalent of 8,800 each evening.



QE remembers Royal Oak tragedy

WHILE in Scapa Flow to mark the 100th anniversary of the birth of carrier aviation, HMS Queen Elizabeth had just enough time to put one of her RIBs in the water to pay her respects over the wreck of the Royal Oak.

The battleship was sunk by a U-boat which evaded the RN's defences and entered the wartime anchorage on October 14 1939, catching the Home Fleet off guard.

HMS Royal Oak, which saw action at Jutland, was torpedoed and sank in a matter of minutes, taking 883 men down with her – many of them boy seamen.

Among the sailors lost on that fateful night was PO Stephen Slade, a 28-year-old gunner from Bristol who had served in the Royal Navy for 12 years. He was survived by his wife, Joan, and two-year-old daughter, Patricia.

Almost 78 years later, the senior rating's great-grandson, LA Justin Charles had the opportunity to visit the site of the tragedy, now designated

an official war grave.

The 27-year-old climbed into a RIB with the ship's First Lieutenant, Lt Cdr Bob Hawkins and Nathan Logan, one of the industry engineers aboard Queen Elizabeth during her sea trials, who also has family connections with the sunken battleship.

"It was a very poignant moment," said LA Charles. "Having the opportunity to visit the site where my great-grandfather lies and to be able to pay my respects, on behalf of my family, meant a great deal to me, and my grandmother."

Afterwards he told her about the short service. Patricia, who now lives in Worthing, West Sussex, passed on her thanks to Capt Jerry Kyd, saying she was extremely grateful to him for allowing her grandson, and the current generation of Royal Navy sailors, the opportunity to visit the site and to spend a few moments reflecting on the memory of her father and the other crew members who lost their lives that night.



● Capt Ellie Ablett, CPO Craig Hewitt and David Fitzgerald by the winning flowerbed

Picture: Dave Sherfield

Bloomin' Bootnecks

A GARDEN featuring Royal Marines' old boots as planters won top prize in the Raleigh in Bloom contest.

Nine teams took part in the competition at the base to transform flower beds.

The team from the Military Training Unit and 1 Assault Group Royal Marines, consisting of CPOs Craig Hewitt and Steven Burton and civilian member of staff Jacqui Guy, took first prize.

CPO Hewitt said: "Our inspiration came from the items around us, so the targets we used were the boots and the helmets we wear every day. Our aim was to win and we did."

Second were ESS Facilities, followed by ESS Victory Galley in third place.

Others taking part included Interserve Defence, Babcock, the Defence Infrastructure Organisation with Carillion Amey, the Royal Navy School of Seafarers, the Defence Maritime Logistics School and Initial Recruit Training.

Each team was given £100 by the Central Amenities Fund to purchase flowers and other materials.

Competitors were requested to have a sustainable theme with longevity considered in plant choices that would also attract species of wildlife such as bees.

Judging the green-fingered event was HMS Raleigh's Commanding Officer, Capt Ellie Ablett, and the BBC's David Fitzgerald.



HMS Duncan delivers as flagship of NATO task group Friends reunited

HMS DUNCAN sails through the Black Sea alongside the Romanian frigate RS Regele Ferdinand – the former Type 22 HMS Coventry.

The Type 45 led a NATO task group into the Ukrainian port of Odessa – the first Royal Navy vessel to visit the city in nearly a decade.

The Portsmouth-based destroyer is leading NATO's Standing Maritime Naval Group 2 (SNMG2), providing reassurance and deterrence in the Black Sea, as well as commanding NATO's counter-migration activity in the Aegean.

The force was given a plum berth in the cruise liner terminal – a stone's throw from the Potemkin Steps, made famous by legendary film director Sergei Eisenstein – and warmly welcomed by Ukrainian leaders, including the head of the country's navy, Vice-Admiral Ihor Voronchenko.

As well as the usual receptions and demonstrations and tours, including a rare chance for Odessans to look around the visiting warships, cultural visits were lined up so the sailors could sample one of the grandest and most historic cities in the Ukraine.

"It was a privilege to lead a NATO task group into the port of Odessa, Ukraine," said Cdr James Morley, whose staff is in charge of the naval force.

"We received a very warm welcome. We rushed here on behalf of the 29 NATO members as a sign of NATO's continued support to Ukraine – and we can learn a lot from Ukraine in relation to countering the ongoing threat from cyber and hybrid warfare – conventional, irregular and cyber combined."

The NATO group – Duncan, plus Turkey's TCG Yildirim and Romania's RS Regele Ferdinand – sailed into Odessa having just been working with the Bulgarian Navy for its annual

Black Sea exercise, Breeze, which saw some of the participants 'hunting' the Turkish diesel submarine Preveze.

The 200ft-long silent hunter proved a formidable foe as the Black Sea offers some of the most challenging anti-submarine warfare conditions on the Seven Seas. It's over two kilometres deep in places and water temperature and salinity make it tricky for sonar to locate boats; in short, the waters of the Black Sea favour the submariner.

As an air defence destroyer, Duncan has limited submarine-hunting abilities – her best weapon is her Wildcat helicopter equipped with Sting Ray torpedoes and depth charges.

Much better suited to a protracted submarine hunt are the Yildirim and Regele Ferdinand, while Bulgarian vessels also joined in the game of cat and mouse. As flagship of NATO's Standing Maritime Group 2, Duncan co-ordinated their efforts as its staff – some drawn from Black Sea navies – shared their experience and first-hand knowledge of local conditions.

With the hunt concluded, the NATO group made its way from Varna to Odessa – a journey of 300 miles – and was buzzed by RAF Typhoon jets to test their air defences.

The Eurofighters from No.3 Squadron have traded Coningsby for Constan a in Romania to support the Balkan country's air policing mission over the Black Sea.

Four of the Typhoons are working as NATO's Southern Air Policing Force.

The exercise enabled the ships' teams to practise their ability to defend the task group from an air attack. It was also useful for the RAF pilots as it allowed them to practise engaging maritime targets.

"This is a fantastic deployment which has certainly given me the

opportunity to see the world thanks to the number of places we have visited," said 20-year-old ET(WE) Ronan Speers.

"The highlight so far? Chania in Crete because of all the adventurous training opportunities it offered," he added.

Following the three-day visit to Odessa, the task force sailed with vessels of the Ukrainian Navy for joint training to "strengthen security at sea and in the region," in the words of the host navy.

The task group made its way to the Aegean Sea and the Turkish naval base of Aksaz – and straight into a thunderstorm, which proved appropriate as the group bade farewell to the TCG Yildirim, a frigate named after Ottoman Empire Sultan Bayezid, who was also known as Yildirim or thunder.

During the journey young officers from the Yavuz-class frigate carried out officer of the watch manoeuvres with their counterparts from Duncan. The two ships also executed visual signalling exercises.

Duncan also exercised with the German frigate FGS Brandenburg during their time in the Aegean.

HMS Duncan and the group then headed to the Mediterranean, where the Type 45 was refuelled by the

USNS Patuxent, which simultaneously replenished the amphibious transport dock USS Mesa Verde.

Keeping an eye on the fuel levels onboard Duncan during the RAS was ET(ME) Andrew Beacock, who said: "I've enjoyed every aspect of the deployment so far – keeping the NATO flagship at sea, with all the challenges that involves, and I love the sports we have on the flight deck every Sunday."

The 19-year-old, who joined the RN two-and-a-half-years ago, is hoping to return to HMS Sultan and the RN's marine engineering school following this deployment.

HMS Duncan also conducted winch training and boarding with both Royal Marines and Royal Navy teams.

The ship's medical team conducted the winching exercise, a key role should there be a need to evacuate a casualty from the ship, while the boarding exercise saw one of the ship's sea boats take on the role of a 'vessel of interest' while the ship's Wildcat watched with a Royal Marines Maritime Sniper Team.

Chef Dominic Armfield, 18, who is also on his first deployment since completing

training, said: "I joined the Navy because of the career opportunities it offered – and as a chef working for NATO there are plenty of chances to practise high-end cuisine.

"I've enjoyed learning new skills which will hopefully help with promotion – and then I can teach others what I've learned on this trip. There have also been some good runs ashore, especially Aksaz in Turkey."

Standing Group 2 is one of two NATO naval task forces in the Mediterranean, both of which are under Royal Navy command presently; HMS Enterprise is acting as flagship of Mine Countermeasures Group 2 which performs a similar mission in the same waters, but with the emphasis on dealing with mines/unexploded ordnance past and present.

Following her four-month deployment, HMS Duncan will hand over command of the task group to HMS Ocean.





Task force in Black Sea, Aegean and the Med



Pictures: LPhot Paul Hall, HMS Duncan, NATO and Ukrainian Navy





● AB Adam Davey and PO Darren Muldowney rest between relays

Swimming around the Rock

EIGHT members of the Royal Navy Gibraltar Squadron swam 6.8m around the Rock in a bid to raise £1,000 for the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity.

The squadron's CO, Lt Cdr James Myhill, said: "Before this event I hadn't swum in a pool for about ten years but I have been getting some practice in whilst learning to kite-surf in nearby Tarifa."

"Sea swimming adds many other elements, including the tide and currents, the weather and sea state and of course the traffic that we have to share the water with – anything from little fishing boats up to 40,000 ton super-tankers. All of these extra challenges are what we think makes this a little bit different and will hopefully inspire people to donate to RNRMC."

The swim started from Eastern beach, at the north-eastern limit of Gibraltar's waters with some challenging surf. Once clear of the beach the swimmers turned right and headed south towards Europa Point before swimming up the western side and passing Rosia Bay, the port of Gibraltar and the cruise terminal, finishing in Ocean Village marina.

Lt Tom Lindsey, HMS Sabre's Commanding Officer said: "Overall we completed the swim in five hours. I think the biggest challenges were getting clear of the surf on Eastern beach and the sea that was running against us when we rounded Europa Point."

The team is still collecting sponsorship. To donate visit http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/team/RNGS_Swim_the_Rock or text "Navy Gib" to 70500 to give £5.



Mountains in his sights

A JUNIOR rating hopes to climb the 16 highest peaks in North Wales in less than 24 hours.

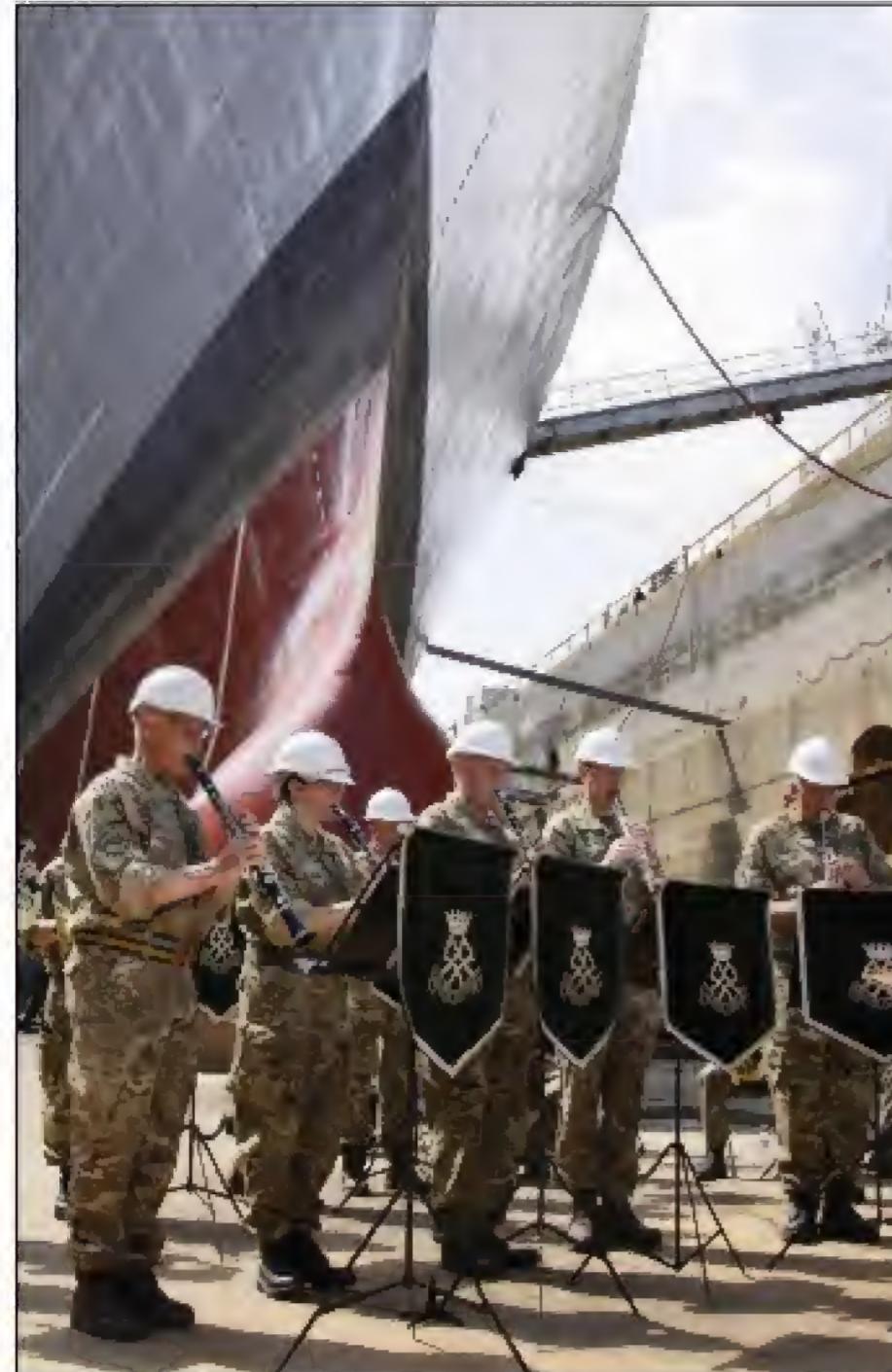
AB Jim Marcer, pictured above, aims to raise funds for the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity.

"It's a gruelling 35-mile route which I have attempted twice as a civilian and failed," he said.

"This time I'm going back with some military bearing and I won't be leaving the mountains until I've reached all 16 peaks rain or shine, 24 hours or not."

For every £50 raised Jim will climb a peak. Anything over that and he will add weight to his backpack.

Anyone wishing to donate can do so at: <https://www.gofundme.com/welsh-3000s-challenge-16-peaks>



● HMS St Albans towers over the band as it plays in the dry dock

From HMS Victory to the Tower of London

WO1's new role as a Beefeater

A FORMER Royal Navy senior rate has joined the Tower of London as a Yeoman Warder.

WO1 Gary Burridge, a former officer of the day aboard HMS Victory, becomes a Beefeater following 32 years in the Senior Service.

Over the next few months, Yeoman Warder Burridge will learn word-for-word the Story – the script of the famous Yeoman Warder Tour – before being allowed to lead a tour himself.

He will also become familiar with each of the 21 separate duties that the Yeoman Warders conduct each and every day.

Y.W. Burridge was raised in Shoreham-by-Sea, West Sussex and currently lives in Chatham, Kent.

The keen motorbike enthusiast also served at Rosyth and Faslane during his Naval career.

"Becoming a Yeoman Warder is a dream come true, I still have to pinch myself," he said.

"I feel incredibly privileged and honoured to wear the uniform as a Member of the Queen's Bodyguard."

They are all former warrant officers from Her Majesty's Forces with an honourable service record of at least 22 years.

Today they combine their traditional ceremonial role with a love of history to make the past come to life for visitors.

Yeoman Warders and their families live within the grounds of the Tower of London but must own a home outside for when they retire.

They wear an 'undress' blue uniform for everyday wear and the full Tudor state dress uniform for ceremonial occasions.

Painting the town

STAFF and students from HMS Collingwood joined forces to put local children through their paces and raise £2,000 for charity.

The Rainbow Centre in Fareham held their first ever Rainbow Rush with assistance from Collingwood's PTIs Suze Badger and John Stephen.

After leading them in a military-style warm-up, each PTI took a team of about a dozen children aged between five and 12 years old around an obstacle course. However, at each stage students from HMS Collingwood's Victory Squadron and volunteers from the National Citizenship Scheme attempted to cover them in different coloured powder paint.

Rock around the dock

IT'S not often a band gets to play under the sea but the Band of the Royal Yeomanry paid a visit to their affiliate warship HMS St Albans – ten metres below sea level.

The Type 23 frigate is undergoing essential repair works following her nine-month deployment and more than 128,000 tonnes of water has been pumped from one of the ten dry docks in Portsmouth Naval Base to allow the work to take place.

The Band of The Royal Yeomanry was due to play a concert nearby and thought they would pay the ship a visit.

"We have played in many an unusual setting," said the band's Director of Music Major Roy Falshaw, "and everywhere from Westminster Abbey to Buckingham Palace."

"But this is definitely the first time in the band's long history that we will have played in a dry dock with the walls literally holding back the sea. It's an experience we will not forget!"

The Band of The Royal Yeomanry is a 35-piece military band based in London and is one of the oldest Army Reserve bands.

HMS St Albans will shortly be flooded back to return to operational capability following her maintenance package.

Deputy Marine Engineer Officer Lt Peter Ainscow said: "Getting into dry dock is a lengthy process but it is essential to carry out essential

underwater maintenance that otherwise would be expensive or impractical to be completed in the water by divers."

"All ships incur wear and tear from deployments and HMS St Albans in particular has been operating at a high-operational tempo which makes this sort of work necessary for her continued capability."

Gareth Harding, Type 23 COM Waterfront Support Manager at BAE Systems, said: "We are pleased to be working in partnership with the ship's company to return HMS St Albans to operations as she nears the completion of her maintenance period at Portsmouth Naval Base."

To get the ship into the dry dock is a long evolution.

The water, which could fill around 1,068,333 bathtubs, was slowly pumped out of the dock for over 11 hours while HMS St Albans was kept sitting in the centre using laser alignment.

The ship was then kept upright by a series of large wooden beams that brace the ship's side against the dock walls, with cranes levering them into position.

The precise process of lining the ship up is vital as all the underwater equipment located on an antisubmarine frigate, including her sonar dome, only have 50cm clearance to the dock bottom once all the water has been drained.

That's a lot of writing...

AN employee from HMS Collingwood was rewarded after 42 years of serving the Royal Navy.

Christopher Hayward received a framed valedictory certificate from Capt Andy Jordan, CO of HMS Collingwood, at a ceremony attended by his friends and colleagues in the base's Unit Personnel Office.



Chris's long association with the Navy began when he joined the service as a Writer in 1975. Highlights of his career included serving in HMS Ark Royal during the filming of the BBC programme *Sailor*, including a visit from Rod Stewart to the ship to film a music video for the hit *We Are Sailing*.

He also served in HMS Liverpool in the South Atlantic immediately after the Falklands Conflict and in HMS Challenger. He then moved to Denmark as part of Commodore Naval Baltic Approaches.

Since leaving the Royal Navy in 1997 with the rank of POWtr, Chris continued to support the Navy as a civilian working for Flagship, VT Flagship, Babcock and finally Interserve, clocking up 14 years as HMS Collingwood's Unit Personnel Office Supervisor.

URNU at Parliament

MEMBERS of the Oxford University Royal Navy Unit (URNU) were given an insight into the workings of government with a tour of the Palace of Westminster.

The unit was shown on to the floor of both the House of Lords and the House of Commons, where the unique traditions, such as the 'Black Rod', were explained.

In St Stephen's Chapel, where the original parliament sat, the group saw a statue with a missing sword, broken off when suffragette Marjorie Hume chained herself to it in 1909.

The group were also able to look in the Royal Robing Room, used for the Monarch to prepare for the state opening of Parliament. They also admired the paintings of the Battles of Trafalgar and Waterloo by the artist Daniel Maclise.

Lt Will Jones, CO of Oxford URNU, said: "It was a thoroughly enjoyable experience and a fantastic opportunity to see the world famous buildings first-hand, which provided a great insight into how the country is governed."



● Yeoman Warder Gary Burridge in his new uniform



The only charity dedicated to supporting children whose parents serve, or have served, in the Naval Service.

Originally set up as an orphanage, we now assist children with a wide range of needs and at times of family crisis. Applications can be made at any time and those seeking assistance can contact the office directly for an application form, or download it from our website.

331 Taylors Avenue, Portsmouth, PO2 9PN • 023 9243 9534 • enquiries@rnmchildrensfund.com • www.rnmchildrensfund.org.uk

Taste of high life for uni medics

TRAINEE doctors, dentists and other students who are being sponsored through university by the Royal Navy swapped lectures for a week-long acquaint course at Britannia Royal Naval College.

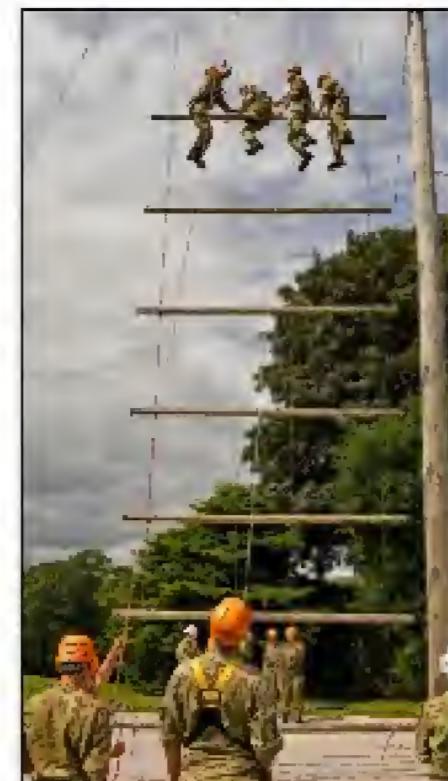
Known as the Bursar and Medic Acquaint Course, two groups of students spent a week each at the world-renowned college for training designed to be both challenging and demanding.

Highlights of the week included a debate, leadership exercises, early morning fitness sessions and swim tests, along with inspections, ceremonial training and a night under cover in the grounds.

Sub Lt Lewis Ginger, BRNC's Sponsored Undergraduate Staff Officer, said: "The purpose of these BMAC courses is not only to give the students a taste of initial military training, it's also to test them, push them, facilitate self-discovery and allow the individuals to push themselves farther than they could possibly believe."

"I have been overwhelmed from the effort that I have seen from the students. We have had a 100 per cent pass rate on the Royal Navy Fitness Test and each cadet completed the high ropes session, a feat that challenges even the bravest person."

"Their conduct around the college and their standards have been impeccable."



Cadet Harry Long, who aims for a career as a Royal Navy Warfare Officer, said: "It's been a jam-packed week and it's also a great opportunity to ask plenty of questions to try and fill in the blanks about the Navy and what life will be like for many of the cadets in a few weeks."

The Royal Navy is currently sponsoring 69 trainee doctors, five dentists and 37 bursars who are based at universities all over the UK. They are administered through Blake Squadron.

Students love look at life in blue suit



Looks like rain, dear

SENIOR rate CPO Jim Barkshire received a reindeer hide to mark his final day of detachment with 847 NAS.

The CPO has served on the squadron for 14 years, holding every rank so far.

His engineering skills were seen as key to the squadron achieving its timings to travel from RNAS Yeovilton to Bardufoss in Norway, as featured in last month's *Navy News*.

Jim was presented with the gift by senior pilot Maj Ian Moore RM.

Gary's grand effort

SENIOR rate Gary Martin celebrates after completing the Prudential London 100 Cycle Ride.

The CPO(AH), based with the Maritime Aviation Support Force at RNAS Culdrose, doubled his initial fundraising target of £650.

Gary, who won his slot through the ballot, raised £1,300 for MacMillan Cancer Support. He chose to help the charity after his wife Tracey lost two relatives to cancer.

"My wife and in-laws were there to cheer me on at the 94-mile checkpoint which was just amazing," said Gary, pictured right with in-laws Linda and Kevin Byron.



A bridge not too far...



A RATING from HMS Sultan is planning a 12-hour endurance run to raise funds for the RNRMC.

ETME Charlie Brooks, pictured left, plans to run around 50 miles in two-mile laps of the Humber Bridge.

Anyone wishing to sponsor him can do so at: <https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/charlie-brooks>



It's Despicable QE

DEEP in the bowels of Britain's newest warship, a Minion has escaped from his master Gru and taken up residence aboard the new 65,000-tonne aircraft carrier.

Or maybe it's a fancily-decorated breathing air storage cylinder...

Ok, you got us. One of HMS Queen Elizabeth's veteran engineers has added a splash of colour and fun to one rather drab engineering compartment.

Marine engineer Chief Petty Officer Neil Hellier, pictured left, picked up brush and paints and turned the yellow cylinder into one of the loveable anarchic characters from the *Despicable Me* film series as a parting gift.

The senior rating was part of the trials and commissioning team assigned to the nation's largest warship, installing and testing machinery in her marine engineer department, such as the air cylinder.

In creating his Minion, Neil - who's just left the ship - is upholding a tradition apparently going back to Tudor times, when forebears of today's sailors used to personalise their places of work and tools.



With one compartment aboard the 92,000-tonne aircraft carrier personalised, there are just 3,010 to go...

HMS Queen Elizabeth has more than 900 souls aboard: 700 ship's company plus more than 200 industry contractors and experts.

Students love look at life in blue suit

FOUR groups of students from around the UK were given an insight into life in the Royal Navy during visits to HMS Raleigh.

Students on work experience, others taking part in an enrichment week and undergraduates signed up to a leadership programme, all spent time at the Torpoint base.

In total 32 students from schools in Plymouth, Cornwall, Somerset and the Midlands were given the chance to undertake elements of the initial naval training course for recruits.

During the week-long work experience programme they were taught how to march and underwent PT sessions.

Highlights included a tour of TS Brecon, the decommissioned minesweeper used for training, an opportunity to get out on the river in small boats, and a visit to HMS Courageous at Devonport Naval Base.

Jack Wheeler, from Looe Community College, said: "I wanted to see what the Navy was all about. I was surprised to see how organised the recruits have to be. I'd like to be an Air Engineering Technician."

Niall Howles, from Waverley, near Worcester, said: "I wanted to get an insight into what the Navy is like and follow in my uncle's



● Students take part in some physical training at HMS Raleigh

Picture: Dave Sherfield

footsteps.

"Before I came I wanted to be part of the Surface Fleet, but since I went on HMS Courageous, I am now looking to go on submarines. It's been a brilliant week."

The programme is also designed to show students the diverse range of training carried out at HMS Raleigh. They spent time at the Royal Navy Submarine School and worked with instructors at the Defence Maritime Logistics School.

HMS Raleigh's Work

Experience Officer WO1 Paul Bell said: "Our work experience programme has been operating for a few years now. We encourage those who are members of the Cadet Forces to wear their uniforms and the whole group march from area to area as a platoon.

"The main aim is to show the young people what it's really like to be in the military as they make important decisions about their future. Ultimately we hope that everyone will take something away from the week regardless of

Help at hand for veterans

A NATIONAL charity is urging relatives to contact them for help if they fear an elderly relative may be struggling with sight loss.

Blind Veterans UK often sees a spike in applications following holiday periods, which the charity attributes to referrals from relatives who have visited a grandparent or elderly relative.

The following signs could indicate a family member is struggling with their sight: Constantly cleaning glasses, tripping and bumping into objects, losing track of items that are clearly visible, avoiding social events and a loss of confidence in going out alone, leaving post to pile up or overfilling or knocking over a glass at the table.

Robert Ware, from Prescot, who served in the North Atlantic aboard HMS Albrighton, a

Hunt-class destroyer, has been helped by the charity.

Robert was based in India for two years in preparation of an invasion of Japan during WW2. He has had his life transformed by the charity's help since losing his sight a few years ago.

His granddaughter Libby said: "The support granddad has received from Blind Veterans UK has not only given him back his independence in everyday life, but also opened up so many fantastic opportunities for him."

If you or your relative served in the Armed Forces or did National Service and is now battling severe sight loss, find out how Blind Veterans UK could help by calling 0800 389 7979 or visiting www.noonealone.org.uk



Sailors help residents of flooded village Clean up at Coverack

SAILORS from Royal Naval Air Station Culdrose rolled up their sleeves to help villagers clean up Coverack following a devastating flash flood.

Bracing the wet weather on the Lizard Peninsula, the 35-strong team helped the Cornish village by clearing the beach area, houses and shops.

They also moved sandbags to protect houses from any further flooding.

Cdr Paul Harrison, the Commander of RNAS Culdrose, said: "Coverack is a neighbouring village to RNAS Culdrose and some of the Culdrose team live there.

"The flooding left Coverack with a lot of mess. The clean-up operation is under control, but the village asked for a few more hands on deck to assist them, so we sent them some of our trainees and other volunteers.

"Community is important to us and we regularly get involved in local projects where we can help to make a difference. These kind of activities are beneficial to our trainees too; they help the sailors come together as a team and get ready for operations abroad."

CPO John 'Soups' Campbell, who lives in Coverack, is acting as the co-ordinator.

He said: "We've basically responded to a request for manpower to help clean up the beach and the town. There is still a lot of silt and debris about.

"We are basically here to work with the local council and villagers and do what they need us to do. The Coverack community is coping really well and the local authority has done a great job – we are simply giving them a hand."

"The weather is awful though and everyone has got a bit wet, but we are sailors and that's what we are used to."

Eyes on ground at rain-hit show



• Above, a helicopter proved popular with visitors; Left, Royal Marines deliver an unarmed combat display



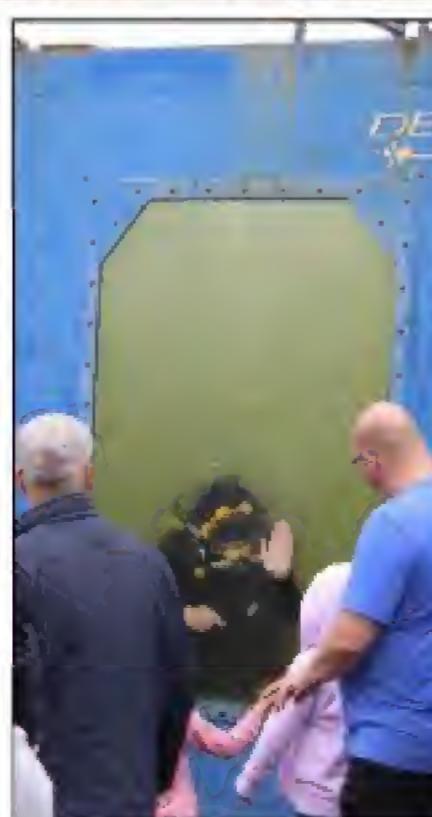
HUGE crowds turned out for the annual Sunderland Airshow, despite poor weather which kept aircraft on the ground.

A concert by a Royal Marines band proved one of the highlights of the show at Seaburn, which also featured a Royal Navy village.

Exhibits were provided by the Youth Engagement Team, the Northern Diving Group, Royal Marines, Royal Naval Reserve, and aircraft from HMS Sultan.

Spectators were wowed by the Royal Marines unarmed combat display, and recruiters from the local AFCO were on hand throughout to answer any recruiting questions.

WO1 Terry Miller said: "It was an extremely busy weekend but, as always, a thoroughly enjoyable event. Those who visited the Royal Navy village had a terrific time and we were delighted to meet them, chat and provide demonstrations and interactive activities."



• An RN diver waves to children at the airshow

Farewell time for Raleigh's master

A ROYAL Navy Master-At-Arms from Plymouth, who has helped induct more than 10,000 recruits into the Service, is hanging up his uniform after a career spanning five decades.

MAA Ian Gritt has served at HMS Raleigh for the past six-and-a-half years where he has been responsible for standards and discipline within the Initial Naval Training School. It was his second stint at the training base in Torpoint, having undertaken the role between 2002 and 2004.

Originally from London, MAA Gritt joined the Royal Navy in 1979 aged 16 and began his career as a junior seaman missileman.

He served on three warships before transferring to the Royal Navy Police in 1991. Since then he has served at sea on three further ships, including two stints on HMS Ocean, and abroad in Gibraltar and at the NATO Headquarters in Shape, Belgium.

The 54-year-old said: "To end my career where it all started is a major highlight, watching young civilians develop into sailors. I also feel a sense of pride serving



with some of the training staff that I took through in my first role as the MAA here.

"It has been an absolute pleasure to have met the parents and families routinely on Fridays whilst conducting the passing out presentations on the recruits' behalf. I can assure you that I will serve alongside any recruit that has passed out of HMS Raleigh.

"Now it's my turn to sit on the Hoe and watch the next generation of sailors deploying, protecting the nation's interest, but hopefully also having fun."

Reservists rewarded

TWO reservists from HMS Sherwood have been recognised for their Service at the unit's annual Ceremonial Divisions.

Forty reservists from the East Midlands unit paraded in front of Cdre David Elford, Naval Regional Commander for Eastern England.

Lt Cdr Russell Dalby received the first clasp to his Volunteer Reserve Service Medal for his 15 years with the unit.

Mid Gil Lock was presented with his new Sub Lt epaulettes after successfully qualifying for promotion.

Commanding Officer of HMS Sherwood, Cdr Rob Noble, said: "The Ceremonial Divisions event is an important date in the unit's calendar. To be able to publicly recognise the time and effort our reservists put in to serving with the RNR in Nottingham is fantastic."

An Operational Honours Board was also unveiled during the event recognising individuals' deployments across the world from 2003 until 2016.

To find out more about East Midlands Reserve Forces and Cadets Association visit <http://www.eastmidlandsrfa.co.uk>

■ A member of HMS Ceres has marked 40 years of Royal Naval Reserve Service.

PO Kevin Marley, who joined the RNR in 1977, served for 20 years as a radio operator at HMS Salford, deploying to France, Hong Kong, Norway, Spain and the USA.

In 2009, PO Marley was awarded the MBE for his commitment to the Civil Service.

To mark his 40 years, he received an engraved glass and limited edition bottle of port from Col J Moulton RNR.

Lucky 13 as charities receive BRNC cash

THIRTEEN lucky organisations have benefitted from Britannia Royal Naval College's charity chest.

A total of £16,831.54 was presented to representatives from the Affray Memorial Association, Britannia's Voices, CHICKS, Children's Hospice SW, Dartmouth Baptist Church, Dartmouth Community Chest, Dartmouth & District Pool Trust, Dartmouth Sea Cadets, Kingswear 23rd Memorial MTB Flotilla, Life Foundation, Mercy Rescue Trust, Southford Schoolrooms Project and The Tracey Monument, St Clements Church, Dartmouth, who were all invited to the College to receive their donations, from Capt Jol Woodard, the Commanding Officer of BRNC.

The money was raised through a variety of events held at BRNC throughout the year, including a charity auction, photo calendar competition, quizzes and various other challenges organised by cadets.

Officer Cadets and international students have also participated in several outreach projects working at Buckfastleigh Otter and Butterly Sanctuary and Kingswear School. In addition they have lent their support to clearing the grounds of debris



• Cadets working with children at the Mercy Rescue Trust in Kenya last year

at St Clements, St Saviours and St Petrox Churches, Dartmouth.

International Officer Cadets have in the past 12 months cleared large areas of overgrowth at the Dawlish Nature Reserve and have also joined forces with volunteers from the local community to help move nearly half a ton of flotsam and jetsam from the breakwater in Brixham's Marine Conservation Day.

Register to give sick a new hope

SEPTEMBER is Blood Cancer Awareness month, marking the start of a campaign to raise understanding in the Armed Forces and Civil Service of those conditions that may lead to significant illness.

Blood cancer affects a large number of people in the UK. Every 20 minutes, someone is told they have the disease – that's 70 people a day, 25,000 people a year.

For most, the only way to survive is to undergo a stem cell transplant. Anthony Nolan and DKMS are the pre-eminent stem cell charities registering people within the UK. Anthony Nolan accepts registrations from people aged 16-30; DKMS between 17 and 55. Both registrations can be conducted by mail order and from the privacy of your own home by means of a cheek swab or spit test.

There is only a three per cent chance of being called forward for stem cell donation and you can change your mind at any time.

"The procedure is pretty painless taking only four to six hours of your time," explains Maj Mandy Islam of the Royal Army Medical Corps. "There are two methods of collecting stem cells. The first is via the bloodstream and the second, although rare, via the pelvis taking less time, which is done under general anaesthetic."

"Within each of us, we have the gift of life, be that through stem cell donating or organ donation. We, in Defence, are in a unique position to help as we are generally young and healthy. Moreover we are a community of 'can-do attitude', we see problems and want to fix them."

Demand for blood cancer treatment outstrips supply for particular groups – the black and Asian communities and young men under 30 – so Maj Islam and her colleagues hope the month-long drive will address this imbalance.

For details and a registration kit visit www.anthonynolan.org (if you're aged 16-30) or www.dkms.org.uk for 30-55-year-olds.



Having fun with family

YOUNG Graham Jenkins has fun in a helicopter at HMS Sultan's Families Day.

Dad Craig was one of hundreds of Service and civilian personnel to welcome their loved ones to the base.

Lots of activities and entertainment were on offer including live music, a barbecue and refreshments. Bouncy castles, face painting, donkey rides, a play bus and a tent crammed full of creepy crawlies were just some of the activities that thrilled younger visitors.

Commanding Officer of HMS Sultan Capt Peter Towell said: "As an establishment we work tirelessly to ensure that our engineers and technicians are trained to the very highest of standards."

"I am very proud of all their efforts and the Families Day provides an excellent opportunity to celebrate their achievements with both family and friends."

Follow (RN) LA law

BACK on June 16 HMS Albion put to sea for the first time in six years, slipping her moorings in Devonport, zig-zagging down the Hamoaze, past the Hoe, Drake's Island and breakwater and out into Plymouth.

Everything on her month of sea trials, by and large, went swimmingly, culminating in a rededication ceremony (see page 11).

Perhaps it did so not purely because of £90m investment and the skill and knowledge of shipwrights, engineers, technicians and sailors involved in the refit, but also because of the instruction a not-insignificant number of her ship's company received a few weeks before sailing.

One sixth of HMS Albion's crew made the short trip from Devonport to go through a series of challenges on the high ropes course, towering up to 45ft above the ground at Britannia Royal Naval College.

Clambering around on the ropes high and low was intended to improve communication and understanding between 50 sailors from all sections of the ship, improve their trust in each other – and, for some individuals, overcome a fear of heights.

"We've all learned from each other," said ET Maisy Carlucci, who'd just joined Albion. "We worked together, motivated each other and tried not to let our fears take over, which was quite a challenge for me. I hate heights..."

LET James Jose, who's gearing up to go on the Leading Hands' Leadership Course later this year, added: "It made me think about leadership and helped me build my style of leadership."

Maybe we've over-egged the RN Leadership Academy 'pudding'. Maybe Albion's sea trials would have gone just as well without the bespoke command, leadership and management development course in Dartmouth.



But the feedback received by the team at the academy's HQ – the former headmaster's house, a fine example of Edwardiana – on the north-eastern tip of BRNC suggests otherwise.

"If ships embrace what their sailors learn here through the coaching and leadership training, it's much more beneficial to the functioning of the ship and so could potentially do better at FOST," says the RNLA's Lt Nick Robinson.

What is the RN Leadership Academy? Well, it's not adventurous training. Or getting chicken, foxes and feed across a river. Or David Brent strumming his guitar. Or hugging people.

No, it's about the art of leadership. Not in the Patton or Monty sense, but everyday leadership on a ship or squadron at all levels.

It's aimed principally, though not exclusively, at ratings – leading hands through to chiefs, because they're the ones who may go up to ten years between formal leadership courses. And

leadership styles can change a lot over a decade.

"If you scream and shout at someone, they just shut down and learn nothing. You do need it as part of your box of tricks when the circumstances need it, but there are many other leadership styles that get results," says Nick.

So in the Royal Navy of 2017, what does good leadership look like?

"It's about leading by example and getting people to follow you," explains Nick's colleague Lt Chris Matthews.

"Know yourself, know your team. If you understand yourself, you can influence your team."

"We want sailors to keep asking questions, to think for themselves."

There are 24 separate leadership courses in all, delivered by 64 military and civilian staff at Dartmouth, Collingwood and the outdoor centre at Talybont in the Brecon Beacons.

Ideally, with more resources, the team would like to visit ships in situ. For now, Portsmouth-

based ships/sailors head to Farnham for any bespoke leadership packages, Devonport crews make for BRNC.

The trainers believe that everyone leaves the academy better able to do their jobs which, collectively, means "improved operational capability".

"The absolute worst case is leaving here knowing something about a colleague that they didn't know before," says Nick.

And the best case?

"They take on board what they've learned and spread that knowledge around the ship, making it more effective," Chris explains.

The academy is fully booked up until the end of October but beyond that the team can (within reason) tweak existing courses to meet the specific requirements of a ship, unit or squadron.

If you think your ship, unit or squadron can benefit from the RNLA's expertise, contact **NAVY OP TRG-RNLA HQ OPS** or call 93749 7170.

Give your view of life in the MOD

ARE you an MOD employee, military or civilian?

Do you want to make Defence a better place to work?

Are you interested in giving feedback on your experience of working here?

Then, tell the Department what it's like – and help to shape policy and improve the working environment by participating in a 'lived experience' research study.

The MOD wants to better understand what it's like working for Defence – and is looking for volunteers to take part in the study.

This will involve an informal conversation about your day-to-day experiences of working in the MOD, which can take place face-to-face, on the phone, or via video call.

The survey has been prompted by the UK's demographics which are changing, and competition for talent getting fiercer.

The MOD needs to adapt to maintain its employment levels now and in the future, and maximise the benefits of drawing on a wider pool of talent.

"This study is critical for the MOD and its future," said Chief of Defence People Lt Gen Richard Nugee.

"It represents a unique and unprecedented opportunity to provide real insight into what it's like to work in Defence and how we can make it a better workplace for all our personnel."

The MOD has contracted experts from QinetiQ, plus Birmingham and Edinburgh Napier Universities to carry out the study to better understand a person's first-hand experience in everyday events.

If you're aged 18 and over and are interested in taking part contact the research team at LivedExperienceStudy@qinetiq.com, or call 01252 394116 to find out more.

Running will help Headley

CAN you run three half marathons in just two weeks? Or maybe just one race.

If you can and you're free on Sundays in September, you might be able to help the men and women being treated at Headley Court.

The Defence Medical Rehabilitation Centre between Dorking and Epsom is due to move from Surrey to the new Defence and National Rehabilitation Centre at Stanford Hall near Loughborough.

To help with the move, as well as raising funds to buy specialist equipment and provide services for patients at Headley Court – in particular to allow people to enjoy social activities and get away from the complex for a few hours and briefly forget about their injuries/rehabilitation – staff have set runners a challenge.

That challenge is spread over three consecutive weekends, with up to 100 runners pounding the streets of Denbies, near Dorking (September 10), Reigate, Surrey, (September 17) and finally the Winchester Half Marathon (September 24).

Runners will be expected to raise at least £350 for Headley Court – or £550 if they fancy having a crack at all three. The centre will cover your race fees.

If interested, contact WO2 Brian Dent RM or Nicols Norville on DMRC-CharityRun@mod.uk.

Not just 'Hogwarts on the hill'



ENCOURAGING the rest of the Senior Service to exploit the expertise and facilities offered by the RNLA is part of the drive by Capt Jol Woodard (pictured) to broaden the Navy's understanding of 'Hogwarts on the Hill'.

In his 25 years since passing out of Dartmouth, the aviator returned only for the occasional dinner. He never took the opportunity to sample the changes made since he passed out – a big mistake, he believes now he's the establishment's commanding officer.

"It is so much more than officer training," he says firmly.

That remains BRNC's bread and butter – the Fleet requires a constant flow of fresh young

leaders. As do foreign navies, whose cadets account for one fifth of the college's annual output of freshly-qualified junior officers – typically 120 young leaders from more than

two dozen navies.

Warfare officers remain at Britannia Royal Naval College after passing out to begin formal training in their specialist field.

Also under the college's wing are all the University Royal Naval Units (the land-based side, not the P2000s) and 120 or so undergraduates studying on RN bursaries.

The 'graduate effect' is probably the biggest change to the make-up of the Officer Corps in decades, if not centuries.

Thirty years ago, the average age of a cadet was 19. Only one in five had been to university.

The would-be officer of 2017 walks through the college's

imposing main doors aged 23. Seven out of ten cadets have a degree.

"The people we get are very impressive – I'm constantly blown away by what they've achieved in their lives even before they get to Dartmouth," Capt Woodard adds.

And lastly there's the RNLA.

"Not everyone understands the RN Leadership Academy – or even knows about it. I did not know it was here at BRNC," he concedes.

He does now – and wants to trumpet the fact.

"We have the capacity – the space, the equipment. Use our expertise and advice.

"There is a lot going on here – and people do not know about most of it."

Head of US 'RFA' pays flying visit to British counterparts

THE head of the US counterpart to the RFA, the Military Sealift Command, dropped in on tanker Wave Ruler to watch the Brits in action.

The ship is currently the FOST support tanker, ensuring ships going through Operational Sea Training are fully trained in the art of replenishments at sea.

During Rear Admiral Dee Mewbourne's whistle-stop visit to Wave Ruler, however, the emphasis was on how the Royal Fleet Auxiliary trains personnel for fire-fighting, damage control, and casualty care in a wartime/action scenario.

So his visit was perfectly timed as he joined

the ship on a Thursday War. The American observed a minefield transit, followed by air attacks, underpinned by an ever-present submarine threat. Touring the ship, he was able to witness ship's teams as they dealt with simulated battle damage of flood, fire and injury to personnel.

"Though my visit was somewhat brief, it has nonetheless been most enjoyable and I was extremely impressed by the enthusiasm and professionalism displayed by the Wave Ruler team," he said as he flew off the tanker.

Next stop: RFA HQ on Whale Island, where the head of the Service, Cdrc Duncan Lamb, briefed his guest on the continuously-evolving

role of the RFA, the status of the Maritime Afloat Reach and Sustainability (MARS) Tankers, Future Fleet Solid Support (FSS) ships and RFA training, before rounding off the visit with an extensive tour of HMS Victory.

"The Military Sealift Command and RFA have historically maintained strong links and this year's visit to the UK by Rear Admiral Mewbourne was a great opportunity to discuss the opportunities and challenges facing each organisation," Cdrc Lamb said. "In spite of differences in scale, there is significant common ground and we have much to learn from our US counterparts."

Naval Families Federation

THE Armed Forces Pay Review Body (AFPRB) makes recommendations to the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for Defence on military pay, allowances and charges.

Thanks to your feedback and experiences, recent changes have included improvements to recruitment and retention of submariners and a new mine countermeasures vessels environmental allowance.

The NFF is invited to give formal evidence annually to the AFPRB, presenting data from Service personnel and their families that has been recorded during the course of the year. In order to ensure that we have as many contributors as possible for this key discussion, we are hosting an online survey for families and serving personnel to complete. It's concise and takes just a few minutes to complete. There are six key questions and

an open text box for additional comments and observations. It is these results, alongside feedback already given, that form the agenda for the evidence session discussions.

The AFPRB listen to these views and take them into account when they recommend changes for us all.

Complete the survey via www.nff.org.uk to have your say.

As a result of June's election, Tobias Ellwood has been appointed the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State in the Ministry of Defence. The NFF is diaried to meet him in the autumn term to talk about issues that are affecting Naval Service families. What would you like us to raise? E-mail contactus@nff.org.uk.

Families Transition Survey

If you and your family have either left the Royal Navy or Royal

Marines in the past two years, or are due to leave in the coming two years, we would like to hear from you.

The Naval, Army and RAF Families Federations are hosting a tri-Service Family Transition Survey to give families a chance to share their views and experiences of the transition process.

The survey can be found on our website and will run until the end of September.

All participants will be entered into a free prize draw to win one of three HP tablets, courtesy of DXC Technology.

Your feedback will populate a tri-Service report highlighting the current support available to family transition, and consider what improvements could be made in the future.

The survey is part of a two-year study into family transition, generously funded by Forces in Mind Trust.

and concise coaching and mentoring style."

David was presented with the award by Christina Nelson, AB(EW) Heyes' widow.

"I'd only been on board HMS Montrose a week when the Captain asked me to see him in his cabin," David said.

"He showed me the email, shook my hand and said: 'Congratulations'.

"It was a really pleasant surprise. It's a shame that it was only myself from the course that got the award because we had such a good class and if I had my way, I'd give it to the whole class!"

CPO Craig McDonald said David, who's now moved on to become EW manager in HMS Montrose, "displayed maturity and leadership in abundance from the early stages of the course. This was particularly evident with the support he provided to students on the Leading Seaman EW course who benefitted from his clear

Compulsory Drug Testing for the Naval Service and Alcohol and Substance Misuse Education.

"I am really enjoying my new role.

"Although I have worked with the Services in a joint environment and at Air Command previously, this is my first time within Navy Command.

"I have been immediately struck by the passion and commitment of my teams whether they are regulars, reserves, civilians or contractors, they all want to give of their best to support the unique operating characteristics of the RN."

Angela believes that civil servants should consider a post in the MOD if the opportunity arises.

"I would absolutely encourage others to work in Defence, and the RN – the variety of roles available is amazing.

"Although my career anchor is HR, that has opened up numerous roles within very different areas of Defence.

"I have worked on large-scale relocation programmes as well as smaller, more discrete projects to the job I have now working within military HR.

"Having worked within Head Office, Air Command, HQ Surgeon General and now NCHQ in Portsmouth, I know how many fantastic opportunities there are outside of London as well as in London, and would encourage people not to rule out other locations when looking for their next interesting role."

"My areas of responsibility are large and I cover a wide range of issues including the Armed Forces People Programme, Pay, Welfare and Physical Development.

"Broken down into six areas they are Strategy and Policy (including the Naval Service Executive Team and the Naval

Personnel Liaison Team), Diversity and Inclusion Team, Pay, Pensions and Allowances Team, Job Evaluation Judge, Personnel Research and People Support.

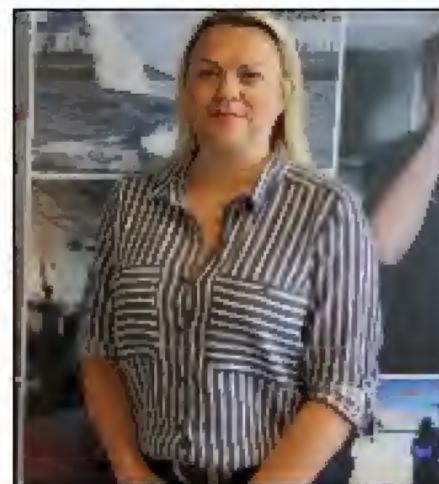
"I am looking forward to seeing how sailors and Royal Marines live in units – I am responsible for habitability issues/ accommodation at sea in current platforms.

"I am also responsible for influencing and shaping future policy with respect to the Armed Forces People Programme, as well as welfare and people support for all RN Service personnel.

"I think I am the first senior civil servant to work in military HR within a front line command – I also have an interesting split within my area of responsibility.

"I have a strategic policy side, but also a large delivery organisation in People Support.

"Interestingly I am responsible for the delivery of the



THE Navy has a new head of people strategy – and for the first time that key role is taken up by a civilian.

And the new boss – Angela Pope (right) – said that right from the start she has been struck by the "passion and commitment" of her teams, whether military, civil servants or contractors.

Angela started in the MOD as an Administrative Assistant in the late 1990s and worked her way up through a number of human resource roles within the department, both in Whitehall and outside the capital.

She has worked closely with Defence Medical Services and the RAF, and in 2014 was appointed Head of Talent and Senior Civil Service (SCS) Management in MOD Main Building.

Angela's latest role, on joining the SCS in May, was joining Navy Command as Head Naval People Strategy.

"I am responsible for ensuring strategic coherence in the policies for Service personnel in the Naval Service by defining people strategy, setting the supporting policy and directing the associated research and concept development," said Angela.

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ASK YOURSELF:

- Were you made in the Royal Navy?
- Do you want to give others the opportunity to make it in the Royal Navy?
- Are you seeking a rewarding Second Career?

If the answer to any is yes then...

APPLY TO BECOME A CAREERS ADVISER.

Flag Officer Sea Training is currently seeking RN and RM WOs, Senior Rates and SNCO Service Leavers and former Service (those that left Service under 3 years), to work in Armed Forces Careers Offices which are listed on the map.

Positions are nationwide, employed on Full Time Reserve Service (FTRS) (NCS) Limited Commitment.

Salary starts from £30k with promotion opportunities to rise to £43k.

FTRS rates of pay apply (Reviewed annually and pensionable).

For more information contact:

PSTN: 01929 403172

MII: 94374 3172

E-mail: navycnr-rnsrtrainingassist@mod.uk

navygraphics 17/0551



Trophy honours EW rating

A GRADUATE of HMS Collingwood's Maritime Warfare School is the first recipient of an award in memory of a sailor killed in the Falklands.

PO(EW) David Bell, from POEW Qualifying Course 1603, collected the ABEW Steve Heyes Award for best student of the training year.

The award, sponsored by Cobham Aviation, was named after a young able seaman, an electronic warfare specialist on HMS Ardent which was sunk during the landings at San Carlos.

Steve is commemorated at the Fareham establishment

with a tree and a classroom in Lewin Building named after him; the new trophy – presented to the top PO(EW) student as assessed by all EW training staff – ensures his name is synonymous with EW training at Collingwood.

CPO Craig McDonald said David, who's now moved on to become EW manager in HMS Montrose, "displayed maturity and leadership in abundance from the early stages of the course. This was particularly evident with the support he provided to students on the Leading Seaman EW course who benefitted from his clear

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Senior civil servant leads Naval people strategy

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WHAT INTELLIGENCE DOES SHE HAVE?



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Pensions prompt questions

BEFORE April 6 last year the state pension was made up of two parts – the Basic State Pension and Second State Pension (S2P), writes the Forces Pension Society.

More than 50 per cent of the population, including the Armed Forces, and all other Public Service Pension Schemes, were “contracted out” of S2P, which meant members paid 1.4 per cent of pay less National Insurance Contributions (NICs) than those “contracted in” and received less state pension.

From April 6 last year everybody who pays Class 1 NICs will pay them at the same, higher, rate. This Q&A covers the main points:

Will I have received less ‘take home’ pay from April 6 2016?

Probably “yes”, because pay is rising at one per cent a year and your NICs increased by 1.4 per cent of pay. Add to this the annual increases for food and accommodation...

What will I get for my money?

The ‘old’ Basic Pension rate for those contracted out went up to £122.30 per week from April 6 this year. The new Single Tier Pension from the same date is £159.55 for those who qualify.

Do I have any choice about paying NICs?

No – we all pay NICs as long as we are working and under state pension age.

And how long do I have to pay to qualify for the Single Tier Pension?

With a total of 35 years’ worth of NICs, at least 7.5 years at the higher rate, you will qualify for the full higher rate.

How do I check my position?

Visit www.gov.uk/check-state-pension

If you are a member of the Society and have questions on this, email us at pensionenquiries@forpen.co.uk, or to learn more, visit www.forcespensionsociety.org

Hull of a day

AROUND 50,000 people of all ages enjoyed Hull Veterans Weekend, part of the City of Culture programme.

The Royal Naval Village featured the Youth Engagement Team with an inflatable assault course, the Northern Diving Group with a dive tank and members of the local University RN Unit and Armed Forces Careers Office staff.

Cdr Phil Waterhouse, Naval Regional Commander Northern England, attended the Drum Head Service on the Sunday.

Naval Quirks

AIRCRAFT HAVE BEEN PART OF RN OPS FROM WWI TO THE FALKLANDS WAR AND BEYOND...

BUT DID YOU KNOW OUR ADMIRALTY HAD THE CHANCE TO BUY THE WRIGHT BROTHERS' INVENTION AND TURNED IT DOWN?

Sorry! But have you seen the price of string nowadays?...

JUST THINK HOW AN ACCEPTANCE MAY HAVE AFFECTED LATER HISTORY...

OH, I DON'T KNOW... MICAH

.. I PERSONALLY THINK THEIR AERO-PLANE WOULD'VE BEEN OUTCLASSED IN THE FALKLANDS...

After looking at stalls and displays at the open day – which attracted more than 3,000 people – the visit ended with a performance by the Royal Marines Band Plymouth.

The Newport group then enjoyed an evening of refreshments, entertainment and the odd tot at the White Ensign Club, Exeter, before they headed back home.



Medal for Malcolm

SOME 65 years after having returned home from the Korean War, Stowmarket RN veteran Malcolm Robertson (above) has been recognised by the Republic of Korea with their Ambassador for Peace Medal for his service.

Malcolm, who joined the Royal Navy as a Boy Seaman at HMS Ganges in 1949, served in Korea between 1950 and 1952 on aircraft carriers HMS Triumph and Glory.

He was presented with his medal by Tim Jarvis, Chair of RNA Area 5.

Frank is mourned

A BUGLER from the RM School of Music, Portsmouth, sounded the *Last Post* for D-Day veteran Frank Scrivener at his burial in St James' Cemetery, Dover.

The former leading seaman served in D-Day landing ship HMS Princess Astrid.

In a ceremony for at Dover College last year he received the Legion d'Honneur for taking part in the Allied invasion, and he occasionally returned to France with members of the Normandy Veterans Association.

Back in civilian life, he became manager of the former Essoldo cinema in Castle Street, Dover.

He leaves a widow, Dora, three sons, 10 grandchildren and 11 great grandchildren.

Wildfire III service

THE ANNUAL HMS Wildfire III parade and service in memory of those who served in minesweepers based at Queenborough during World War 2 takes place on September 10.

The parade masters at Holy Trinity church at 1.30pm, with a service in Queenborough Park at 2pm. There will be light refreshments and entertainment at Queenborough Social Club afterwards.

Homes for veterans

A £3.4 million project in Kent for veterans who require specialist facilities has been completed.

The Royal British Legion Industries (RBLI) scheme at Aylesford, three years in the making and entirely designed by Clague Architects, includes 24 one- and two-bedroom flats.

They are suitable for wheelchair users, with features including adjustable worktops, extra-wide door frames, lighter doors and wet rooms.

Tim Wolfe-Murray, Partner at Clague, said: “We could not be prouder of the work that has been done here, and we know that it is going to have a major impact on the lives of so many of our country's veterans.”

The development was designed to create a small sustainable community for ex-Forces personnel both young and old.

It is part of the RBLI Village where a variety of welfare, health care, employment and other support services are available, as well as 80 houses and bungalows.

The new buildings – Invictus Games House and Victory House – are built around a courtyard which features gold-medal winning Chelsea Flower Show Garden, designed by Jo Thompson and donated by the Chelsea Barracks Foundation.

Director of RBLI Living James Rudoni said: “These stunning new apartments, which are specifically tailored for veterans and their dependents – particularly those who are at risk of homelessness and facing challenges due to disability – will become a home to people who may otherwise struggle.”

RBLI was established in 1919 to provide employment, training and support to members and veterans of the Forces, their families and dependents, as well as those with a disability or health condition.

It is a sister charity to, though separate from, the Royal British Legion, with which it has a shared ethos of supporting the Armed Forces community.

HMS Hood veterans at service

THREE veterans who served on wartime battlecruiser HMS Hood were at the ship's annual commemoration service at St John the Baptist Church, Boldre, Hampshire.

A full church paid tribute to the 1,415 men who died when Hood was sunk by the Bismarck on May 24 1941 in the North Atlantic.

The three veterans – Cdr Keith Evans (97), chairman of the HMS Hood Association, Lloyd Adams (102) and Alec Kellaway (99) – had all served in Hood earlier in the war but moved on before she was sunk.

The congregation included relatives of those who died, including Titch Blachford, of Sway, Hampshire, whose great-uncle Capt Ralph Kerr was the battlecruiser's CO and who died in the tragedy.

Also in the church were several members of the Sea Cadet Corps.

Cdr Tony Pearse, a member of St John's, who gave the address, pointed out that a service has taken place each year since 1949, initiated by Boldre parishioner Mrs Holland, wife of Vice-Admiral Lancelot Holland, who was among the dead.

"Mrs Holland was determined that people should not forget," said Cdr Pearse.

He reported how last year the ship's bell had been retrieved from 9,000ft deep and had been placed on display in Portsmouth.

He said: "Some felt it was in its own resting place, but there is no headstone for those who perish at sea and now future generations will be able to gaze upon it in thanks."

Cdr Evans said: "Looking forward, I think it is absolutely right that we continue to commemorate this event."

£50 PRIZE PUZZLE



THE mystery ship in our July edition (right) was HMS Blake, pictured sailing past Alcatraz Island in San Francisco Bay.

The correct answers were provided by Mr Smith, of Rushden, who wins the £50 prize.

This month's mystery tanker (above) was launched in the last week of 1944 by Swan Hunter for commercial work but taken over by the Admiralty, seeing service in the last weeks of the war.

She went on to serve for two decades and played an important role in developing the art of replenishment at sea (RAS).

Another high-profile role she played was that of supply tanker to an infamous German South Atlantic raider – in a 1956 war film.

She was withdrawn from service in 1966 and sent for scrapping the following year.

1) What was her name, and 2) what was the name of the tanker/prison ship she played in the film?

Complete the coupon and send

MYSTERY PICTURE 271

Name: _____

Address: _____

My answers: (1) _____

(2) _____

Thames tribute as WW2 tug turns 90

ONE of the last coal-fired twin-screw steam tugs in the world was saluted by the Royal Navy in London to mark its 90th birthday.

The ST Portwey, which was built on the Clyde in 1927, came under the command of the Royal Navy during WW2 when she was based in Dartmouth and carried out rescues of vessels and crews sunk by enemy action in the Channel.

She steamed alongside HMS President in London, and was saluted by Cdr Richard Pethybridge, who said: "It was a real honour to salute this little steam tug which is one of hundreds of tugs and other vessels that were taken under command during WW2 and carried out sterling work."

He added: "The Royal Navy and its warships could not have worked as well as they did without the help and support of vessels like Portwey and their crews, which put themselves in harms way to carry out rescues, tow ships, and remove all sorts of debris from the Channel. It seemed fitting that we should salute a 90-year-old veteran which gave such sterling service and is still steaming thanks to a group of dedicated volunteers."

In 1944, Portwey was involved in preparations for the D-Day landings. Landing crafts were massing in the Dart and sometimes required Portwey's help. The tug also rescued



● Cdr Richard Pethybridge salutes the ST Portwey as she passes HMS President in London

damaged vessels from the disastrous American Slapton Sands exercise in April 1944, which was detected and attacked by German torpedo boats.

ST Portwey, skippered by 82-year-old Tom Carlaw, is run by a charitable trust. The tug is manned by a small group of volunteers who raise money to keep the veteran running so that future generations can see a steam tug in action.

Chairman of the Trust Steven Page said: "It was a great honour for the tug to be saluted by the Royal Navy on its 90th birthday and for them to recognise not only the role that the tug played

during WW2 but the work that the volunteers do."

He added: "We want future generations to see Portwey in action and our next goal is to get her to her 100th birthday, but if this is to happen we need more volunteers and we need to generate thousands of pounds to keep her running. Donations to the Trust are very welcome as are corporate sponsors that we can work with in a variety of ways."

To donate visit: <http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/charity-web/charity/initialCharityHomepage.action?uniqueVmUrl=stportwey>



● ST Portwey's skipper Tom Carlaw, 82

Farewell to John

STAFFORD branch stalwart S/M John Pownar has died following long illness.

S/M John, who finished his service as a PO GAI and an instructor at HMS St Vincent, served for more than two years in HMS Comus throughout the war from 1949 to 1951 – he was a member and secretary of the BKVA as well as the RBL.

He was instrumental in organising the presentation of the Korean Ambassador's Peace Medal to BKVA members from all over the Midlands by the Naval Attaché Captain Seungeon Ji from London's South Korean Embassy despite being very ill.

John held most offices at Stafford and also spent a lot of his time and energy organising and collecting for various charities including SSAFA, the RBL Poppy Appeal, Dame Louise Children's Hospice, New Life Children's charity and others.

He was also a great supporter of Stafford Sea Cadets.

MEMBERS of Bude branch organised a 'meet, greet and recruit' exercise in the foyer of Morrisons supermarket in the town – and they hope it might result in a few new faces at their meeting this month.

Generous residents and visitors also donated more than £450 to branch members, which will be passed on to an appropriate RN or RM charity.

And for other branches who might like to try the idea, Bude shipmates say that "enthusiasm is

the keyword – smile, greet, talk, recruit!"

The branch also entered a team in the Area 4 Croquet Championships, staged at Pencarrow House near Bodmin.

Having been runners-up in the first such championships last year, hopes were high – but they fell at the first stage and were home by 5pm (although players ruefully suggested "a dozen sheep could have been usefully employed on the surface for the week beforehand").

Do you need a home in London?

- Well placed in the heart of Mayfair, the Naval club is the only London Club providing a Naval and maritime environment where all those interested in the sea can feel at home.
- It is NOT necessary to have been a Naval Officer to become a member. We welcome all those with an interest in maritime affairs and the sea in general.
- The club is open 7 days a week throughout the year for accommodation and meals, and offers special weekend break rates of two nights for the price of one.
- Private meeting, conference and function rooms available. Corporate members also welcome.

For more information visit our website www.navalclub.co.uk

Biennial Parade amended

SOME minor changes have been made to plans for the Biennial Parade in London next month.

Following incidents in London and Manchester earlier this year, the Metropolitan Police have reviewed events such as the parade to keep them as safe as possible.

Changes include a new muster point – King Charles Street, instead of Whitehall Place, which may require some thought in terms of transport as there is a flight of stairs to negotiate between Horse Guards Road (where coaches and minibuses may be parked) and King Charles Street.

The parade, which marches off shortly after 1030 on Sunday September 10, will return to this point after a loop around one of the memorials and a wreath-laying ceremony at the Cenotaph.

As the route is considerably shorter than in past years, it is hoped that it will prove more attractive for shipmates with mobility concerns.

The massed band of the RN Volunteer Band Association is due to join the parade, along with Sea Cadets and veterans from both (AFAFN/NVOZM) (Belgium) and the Irish Naval Association.

The RN will be represented by two platoons of trainees from HMS Sultan and HMS Collingwood, and Associations and individuals related to the Naval Service are invited to parade with their shipmates.

The Parade Commander will be S/M Mick Kieran, assisted in the Marching Section by S/M Dean Deakin and S/M Chris Smith (Type 42 Association).

S/M Steve Susans will be Standards Marshall.

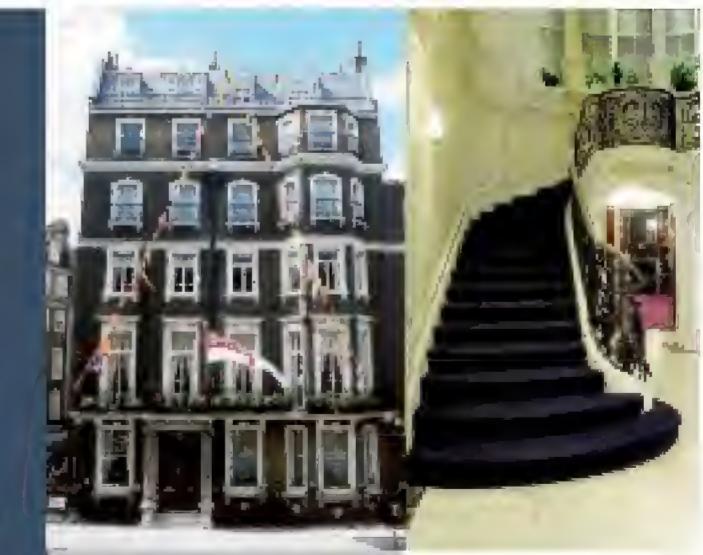
The usual sandwiches and chips will be available at the Civil Service Club in Great Scotland Yard after the parade. The club will open at 0900 for coffees and comfort breaks for those on parade or supporters.

Devon concert

A CONCERT for Remembrance will be held in Exeter for one year only – and funds raised will help ensure the more traditional Devon Festival of Remembrance will return to Exeter Cathedral next year.

Tickets for the concert, on November 2 at the Mint Methodist Church in Fore Street, cost £7.50 – email rbdevon.events@mail.com or call 07588 129131 for details.

The concert, organised by Devon County RBL, is especially focusing on the participation of Devon's youth, who, it is hoped, will continue this annual Act of Remembrance well into the future.



THE NAVAL CLUB
LONDON

Summer of sport and civic duties

NORTHAMPTON Sea Cadets have been enjoying a busy summer of ceremonial duties, sport and supporting their local community.

The unit had the honour of supporting two Armed Forces Day events in Northampton and Banbury.

The Northampton parade was well attended and, despite a very hot day, the Sea Cadets led the cadet forces diligently on the parade.

This came shortly after the Mayor of Northampton appointed POC Jessica to the role of the Northampton Mayor's Cadet and Brackley Town Mayor appointing Cadet 1st Class Ben to the same role within Brackley.

CO Lt (SCC) Chris Read RNR said: "These links with the local community bring our young people closer to the community and demonstrate the positive impact that our organisation has on the development of young people."

POC Jess was also lucky enough to be selected for an international exchange programme and spent a memorable ten days with the Bermudian Sea Cadets.

The unit has now completed its outreach scheme partnering with local schools through the RYA OnBoard scheme.

Unit cadets and volunteer instructors worked with two primary schools to introduce pupils to sailing – 16 youngsters learnt to dinghy sail as part of the programme.

Participants completed a five-week learn to sail course, earning an RYA Stage 1 dinghy sailing certificate – and a new skill.

Cadets have attended a multitude of activities and events, including an 'I'm a Senior Cadet... Get me out of here!' weekend with Nottingham unit, where cadets learnt leadership skills, and the Royal Marines Cadets attended a Training and Advancement Board.

There were various boatwork training weekends, either at sea with Scarborough unit or locally at Thrapston boating station.

In addition, cadets have developed their canoeing and kayaking skills at the TS Tuna paddlesports weekend in Bedford.

But it wasn't just the older cadets who have fun, as the unit hosted a Junior Sea Cadet weekend.

They had a fun filled weekend of boating on the river, followed by orienteering in Salcey Forest, where they had great fun in locating muddy puddles, finding sticks and attempting to cross ditches.

The unit was also delighted to name its newest boat after its first Mayoral president.

Since the death of the previous unit president, Mr Richard Jones of Crockett and Jones, a long-term supporter, ex-cadet and Royal Navy officer, the unit was without a president and turned to the borough council.

In recognition of holding the freedom of the borough the Mayor of Northampton is also the unit president, and the first holder of this post was Cllr Penelope Flavell.

The unit has decided this year to name one of its new boats Penelope in recognition of the teamwork between the young people and how they work within their local community.

Old HQ demolished as unit seeks home

THE battered headquarters building of Whitehaven unit has finally succumbed to the inevitable as the search for a long-term replacement continues.

As the unit celebrates its 75th anniversary, the headquarters site for all but two years has been cleared as part of a redevelopment project that will focus on the heritage buildings – the Watchtower and the Rocket House.

The Sea Cadets' building was devastated by Storm Xavier in 2013, and further damaged in subsequent storms.

Access to the building was all but impossible for three months, and although the building was not a total loss, damage to the electricity system and heating was such that insurance would not have covered the whole cost.

The extent of damage was such that the building was deemed no longer usable by the Corps, and was consequently handed over to the Harbour Commissioners during the summer.

It was demolished in July, and although the unit has a temporary home, they are still looking for a suitable long-term location for a new HQ.

"We spent the first couple of years [after the building was damaged by Storm Xavier] in the local police station," said unit chairman David Abbott.

"When that was required for operational use a local businessman, Donald Dixon, allowed us to use a small building he owns which itself is ultimately to be demolished.

"We have a home, which is fantastic, but we know it is not a long-term solution."

Relocation to the police station ensured the unit's survival, and when that option became unavailable (the space was needed for police operational use) the offer of a temporary solution by Mr Dixon again provided Whitehaven with a lifeline.

They now occupy a small building in the corner of Mr Dixon's store's car park – it was bought with the intention of demolishing it to improve access, but until it is actually razed the unit has been allowed to use it free of charge.

"Like many others, I have very fond memories of our old HQ, but the Sea Cadets is far more than just a building.



● Above and right: the former Whitehaven unit HQ building at Old New Quay is demolished as part of redevelopment work

Pictures: The Whitehaven News/ CN Group, Cumbria

The unit has been actively seeking a new base since 1974.

"We have been working with Copeland Council, Britain's Energy Coast, Cumbria County Council and others to try to locate a piece of land on which we can build, or an existing building which we can convert," said David.

"It's proving to be a very long, difficult and frustrating search, but we are definitely not giving up."

"The demolition of the unit's old HQ has been a sad and painful experience for cadets, but more particularly for the staff and former cadets."

"Most of our present ship's company have very few memories of Old New Quay, having spent most or all of their time as cadets in the police station or Kent House, our current home."

Whitehaven's Commanding Officer, Lt (SCC) Peter Lucas RNR, has been associated with Whitehaven unit as a cadet and uniformed volunteer, and is one of many saddened by events.

"Like many others, I have very fond memories of our old HQ, but the Sea Cadets is far more than just a building.

"We all had fantastic experiences and will carry the memories with us forever."

"This may be the end of an era, but it's also the start of a new chapter in our history."

Looking forward, David said that although the new HQ will primarily be for Sea Cadet use the aim is that it should be used by the wider community.

"The Scouts, St John



"I made some very good friends as a cadet, and as an adult, and those friendships have lasted a lifetime."

"Last year the Army Cadets led the local Poppy Appeal, as they always do, but used our building to co-ordinate efforts on Remembrance weekend."

"We hope that all our local voluntary groups will be able to make use of our building."

"We have been, are, and always will be part of the local community and welcome anything that continues and expands our involvement."

Ambulance and others have previously made use of our facilities.

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"The Scouts, St John

Invitation was 'a privilege'

ROYAL Marines Cadets from North London visited Buckingham Palace for the Duke of Edinburgh's final official engagement – a parade marking the end of the Royal Marines 1664 Global Challenge.

Ten cadets from North London attended the high-profile event, which marked the end of a 100-day, 1,664-mile running challenge in aid of the Royal Marines Charity.

The Duke of Edinburgh is Captain General Royal Marines, and the parade at Buckingham Palace was his final solo official

public engagement.

Part of the Sea Cadets national youth charity, Royal Marines Cadets offers exciting waterborne activities to 13- to 18-year-olds, as well as branching off into serious adventurous training, which challenges young people, boosts their self-confidence and encourages teamwork.

Cadets from Waltham Forest, Hornchurch and Upminster, and Haringey detachments marched from Wellington Barracks to Buckingham Palace, where a Royal Guard, Royal Marines Band, 1664 Challenge runners and dignitaries were also present.

Lt (SCC) Bill Collier RNR, Sea Cadets' Senior Events Officer, said: "This was a great opportunity for cadets to acknowledge all the Captain General has done for the Royal



● A Royal Marines Cadet from Norwich unit contemplates Beechey's portrait of Nelson

Picture: Jordan Bacon for Norwich Museums Service

Norwich pay their respects

NORWICH Sea Cadets visited the Nelson & Norfolk exhibition at Norwich Castle to pay their respects to one of the county's most famous sons.

The exhibition, celebrating Admiral Lord Nelson and his relationship with the county of his birth, features objects connected to Nelson, from his boyhood to his death at the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805.

The centrepiece of the exhibition is the vast tricolour ensign of the French warship Le Généreux, which took part in the Battle of the Nile in 1798 and was captured by the Royal Navy two years later.

An extremely rare survivor, the flag measures 16m by 8.3m, and has not been on public display for over a century.

Other significant objects on display include the black velvet drape from Nelson's funeral car and the monumental portrait of Nelson, painted by William Beechey for the City of Norwich and completed in 1801.

The 1805-6 black silk velvet semi-circular funeral drape with water-gilded letters spelling Trafalgar hung on Nelson's funeral car below the coffin and between the wheels.

There are also items on loan from the National Maritime Museum, including the coat Nelson wore at the Battle of the Nile.

Norwich unit is based on TS Lord Nelson, berthed on the River Wensum in the heart of the historic city.

The exhibition runs until October 1 2017.



● Royal Marines Cadets are interviewed on camera over the final official public engagement of the Duke of Edinburgh, who also took the role of Captain General Royal Marines



Lewis is overcoming challenges

CADET First Class Lewis, 13, (pictured above) has been a member of Aylesbury unit since he was ten years old.

He has Asperger's, dyspraxia and hypermobility, and his mum, Alison, said Sea Cadets has helped him to overcome the obstacles that these create.

"Lewis has achieved so much in self-esteem and confidence from his time in the Sea Cadets," she said.

"He has been an active member of the unit since the start, being involved in different activities and representing the unit.

"As a Junior Sea Cadet, he achieved the rate of Junior LC and earning his Commodore's Pennant, he was also awarded the CO's Cup for perseverance and overcoming many challenges and fears.

"This year, he achieved his first aid second-class badge and his navigation badge.

"Lewis has represented or chosen to compete for his unit as part of the colour guard, in rowing, and being a speaker in front of dignitaries at the unit's Royal Naval Parade events.

"He has taken part in a tri-Service cadet weekend, where his team came first and he and another cadet were the youngest members.

"In September, Lewis is off on TS John Jerwood for a week.

"Every year Lewis volunteers to help the unit raise money for the Royal British Legion, and was chosen with other cadets to represent the unit at the unit anniversary night recently.

"He has taken part in parades for remembrance and was in a guard for the Trafalgar Day parade.

"Lewis wanted to join Sea Cadets as I am an instructor in the Royal Marines Cadets and his sister is a cadet there, too.

"Lewis has Asperger's, dyspraxia and hypermobility, and he finds many activities difficult, or he can take longer than others to do them.

"With other unit instructors' encouragement and belief in him, he has overcome the many obstacles that got in his path.

"His communication and social skills have come along, he is more independent and confident in himself, and this is also the same for his school life and how he approaches his work.

"I would like to thank every person I have come across who is part of Sea Cadets, because without their friendship, the place I am now, I wouldn't be here without them.

"Lewis' favourite things about Sea Cadets are his friends there.

"He finds making friends a very difficult challenge due to his communication difficulties, Asperger's and the way he thinks and acts.

"He would like to be a graphic artist, and Sea Cadets has helped him focus on education.

"Lewis is funny, polite and has gained the confidence to stand up for himself.

"He feels like a valued member of society, as part of a team or as an individual, and Sea Cadets accepts him for who he is.

"He doesn't feel the need to hide who he is and be seen as different."

Jessica lands plum role on royal barge



● Jessica aboard the Queen's rowbarge Gloriana

A Staines and Egham Sea Cadet was offered a summer job on the Queen's rowbarge, Gloriana, after impressing the crew and captain during a charity event she attended as a guest.

LC Jessica, 16, was on the barge for the Spelthorne Mayor's River Day and Staines-upon-Thames Day.

However, she soon impressed with her skills and knowledge – and was offered a job once the events had ended.

Ashford resident Jessica, who will be starting A-Levels at Godalming College this month, joined crew members who are older and more experienced.

Jessica, who was on the barge as the Mayor's Cadet for the year, said: "I had been speaking to the captain, and he let me stand by the helm and go up the steps. Then he asked if I wanted to dip the ensign so the barge could go under the bridges. I did a few jobs here and there, and at the end of it he gave me his card and said there was a job if I wanted it.

"I started the next day, and it has been really great. You're always outside, and I find the river relaxing. It is a difficult job, but a lot of fun, too. It will look great on my CV."

Jessica – who hopes to be a psychiatrist when she is older – later found out she was offered the job despite no vacancies actually being available.

"They took me on because they saw how much it meant to me and saw that I could offer something in return. I really appreciate the opportunity."

Now under the ownership of the Gloriana Trust, the royal barge can be found mostly on the River Thames, where charities are encouraged to use it to help with their fundraising and where young people can try out rowing.

"They took me on because they saw how much it meant to me and saw that I could offer something in return. I really appreciate the opportunity."

She set off on July 4, south

she said. "Being in Sea Cadets is something I really enjoy – I wouldn't have done it for six years if I didn't. It has provided me with so many opportunities. I have been on so many courses and met so many people.

"I love boating, but my favourite thing is drill. Sea Cadets has built my confidence; I had never been a naturally confident person until I started there. When I joined aged ten, I would not say a word."

Andrew Adams, Gloriana's skipper, said: "We warmed to Jessica very soon after she boarded. Although embarking as a guest, being the Mayor's Cadet, she showed willingness to help in the running of QRB. It became apparent that Jessica had a number of nautical skills, but we were delighted to be able to teach her not only how to apply what she knew, but develop her skills further.

"Sea Cadets have evidently prepared Jessica for life outside of the school environment, she responds to instruction and understands that work is not a clock-watching environment.

"I look forward to being able to timetable Leading Cadet Pearce to further duties on board HM QRB Gloriana."

Gloriana was named by the Queen as a lasting legacy to mark her Diamond Jubilee.

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Getting it right Students thrive at St John's

QUEEN Victoria School (QVS) exists for the benefit of Service families who have a link to Scotland.

If you are Scottish, have served in a Scottish regiment or are based in Scotland, QVS is proud to offer, by Royal Warrant, continuity of education to Service children.

QVS is funded by the Ministry of Defence, and offers quality boarding-based education to those children who may otherwise have attended several different schools in the approach to their National and Higher exams.

Our Boarding House teams take the care of your children exceptionally seriously, and past reports by the Care Inspectorate underline that.

In pupil support, we have an excellent GIRFEC (Getting it Right For Every Child) system

in place.

On the academic side, we have an excellent record of achievement in both National and Higher qualifications.

Academic ability has no bearing on admissions here; we have comprehensive and inclusive year groups.

And, in addition to all of that, we are proud to offer our traditions of sport, ceremonial piping and drumming, Highland dancing, parades and Combined Cadet Force, as well as an extensive 'hobbies' programme that keeps everyone busy while they are here.

To find out more, please phone us on +44 (0)131 310 2927.

Alternatively, you can write to the Admissions Secretary, Queen Victoria School, Dunblane, Perthshire FK15 0JY, United Kingdom.

LOCATED in Portsmouth, St John's College – a day and boarding school for boys and girls aged 2 to 18 – has enjoyed a long and established history of educating students from service families.

Our aim is excellence for all our students.

No matter what their particular strengths and starting points, we do everything we can to help them realise their full potential.

This is why St John's College

students thrive.

Lt Cdr Raeburn, who has two sons at St John's, said: "After returning from a foreign posting we became increasingly aware that our children would need a much greater level of stability in their education.

"St John's College was most accommodating.

"They looked at my eldest son's academic performance and were exceptionally helpful in reassuring us that they could quickly pick up the slack where he had been disadvantaged in a foreign system.

"After returning to the UK we have had an excellent

relationship with the school, and as a result my younger son also enrolled.

"Situated in the heart of Southsea the school has excellent communications to the rest of the country.

"As it is based in a Naval town we were pleased that if the boys had any problems they were able to contact our friends in the Service, based in Portsmouth, at short notice."

Visit during our next Open Event – Saturday 7 October 9.30am.

To book telephone 023 9281 5118 or visit the school website: www.stjohnscollege.co.uk

A family atmosphere

LOCATED on the Dorset and Somerset border, Perrott Hill allows children to thrive because of the family atmosphere, excellent teaching and breadth of extracurricular activities and opportunities.

Boarding is a key part of life and our experienced boarding team support children as they

become more independent and learn important skills, from being organised to teamwork.

Improvements to our boarding facilities include a new common room for boys and girls and reconfiguration of the boarding space as our boarding provision continues to go from strength to strength.

Our new Roundhouse in the woods has been a popular addition to our Forest School and served as a perfect base for hosting a special summer event with local primary schools.

Designed to blend into the landscape, a new purpose-built music school to enhance our music provision and inspire generations of musicians has recently been completed.

Our sporting teams continue to have fantastic seasons, from individual athletic and swimming performances to team sports including rugby, hockey, netball and cricket.

To find out more about life at Perrott Hill, come to our Autumn Term open mornings on Friday October 6 and Saturday October 7. These provide a wonderfully informal way to visit the school, meet current pupils and chat with our head, Tim Butcher.

Email admissions secretary Nola Stone on nstone@perrott hill.com or call 01460 72051.

Impressive results – and happy as well

BROMSGROVE School's results are impressive, but Bromsgrove is much more than a place to get good grades – it prides itself on being a happy school where children of all ages can thrive both academically and outside of the classroom.

The 2016 ISI inspection rated Bromsgrove as excellent in every category, and the most recent *Good Schools Guide*, following inspection in February 2017, states that "the school looks for what every individual is good at and helps them find their niche and passion."

Bromsgrove has a vibrant arts scene, with numerous opportunities for pupils to perform both large and small projects.

A new performing arts centre with a concert hall and multiple

rehearsal areas is currently under construction, scheduled to be completed this month.

There is considerable strength, too, in sports, and a large number of representatives at county, regional and national level.

The School's U18 rugby team were winners of the NatWest School's trophy in 2015 and 2016 and semi-finalists in 2017 while the girls' U18 netball team are National champions.

There is an extensive activity programme with optional Saturday activities, when pupils may select from a diverse range of recreational and academic activities.

Catering for 1,600 pupils aged 3-18 on three sites, the School is a small global community – a place to live, work and make friends for life.



Perrott Hill

A day and boarding school, offering excellence in education for ages 3-13 year olds.

Autumn TERM OPEN MORNINGS

Friday 6th & Saturday 7th October 2017

Come and see our school in action, and meet our pupils and our Head, Tim Butcher.



You are warmly invited to come and explore our fantastic school on the South Somerset/Dorset border, including our new boarding facilities and our Music School on the edge of the woods. Rated 'EXCELLENT' in every category in our latest ISI inspection.

To book your place, please contact our Admissions Secretary, Nola, on 01460 72051 or email admissions@perrott hill.com

Perrott Hill, North Perrott, Somerset TA18 7SL

www.perrott hill.com [@perrott hill](https://www.facebook.com/PerrottHillSchool)

OPEN MORNINGS

Prep School (ages 7 - 13) Saturday 30th September

Senior School (13+): Saturday 14th October

Please contact Admissions for details

bromsgrove-school.co.uk

01527 579679 admissions@bromsgrove-school.co.uk



BROMSGROVE SCHOOL

Founded 1553

FLAIR
DISCIPLINE
ACADEMIC RIGOUR

Generous Forces' Bursaries Available

Heart of England location.

ISI Inspection 2016:
Excellent in every category

Co-educational,
Day & Boarding

1450 pupils aged 7-18
with over 500 boarders

OPEN EVENT

Saturday 7 October

9.30am - 12.30pm

Our school fees are fixed at CEA + 10% of the school fee.

Find out more at our Open Event.



ST JOHN'S COLLEGE

SOUTHSEA

Contact us to book your place: 023 9281 5118
info@stjohnscollege.co.uk | www.stjohnscollege.co.uk

Queen Victoria School



Raising to Distinction

Admissions Deadline 15 Jan each year

Queen Victoria School in Dunblane is a co-educational boarding school for the children of UK Armed Forces personnel who are Scottish, or who have served in Scotland or who have been members of a Scottish regiment.

The QVS experience encourages and develops well-rounded, confident individuals in an environment of stability and continuity.

The main entry point is into Primary 7 and all places are fully funded for tuition and boarding by the Ministry of Defence.

Families are welcome to find out more by contacting Admissions on +44 (0) 131 310 2927 to arrange a visit.

Queen Victoria School
Dunblane Perthshire
FK15 0JY





Smart kids Smart parents

Choose a state boarding school
and save more than 50%

State boarding is less than half the cost of independent boarding because government pays for the education. Offering comfortable and homely boarding, top-class facilities and great academic results, state boarding schools are an attractive, affordable option for forces families.

Take a closer look and see how your Continuity of Education Allowance (CEA) could work harder for you and your family.

stateboarding.org.uk

020 7798 1580



Welbeck

The Defence Sixth Form College

The A level Pathway to **STEM** Careers in Defence

For potential engineers with drive, ambition and ability, Welbeck is where potential turns into bright futures as officers in the armed forces or civilian engineers with the civil service.



Students attain a minimum of three STEM A levels at Welbeck including Maths

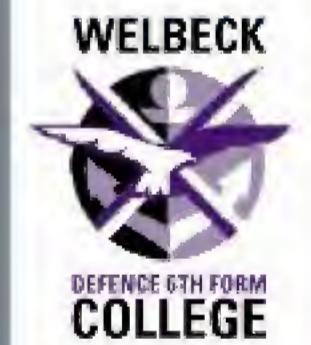
Welbeck tuition funded by the Ministry of Defence with means-tested boarding fees

In 2016, 35% of all A levels were awarded at A* or A and 81% A* - C

Choice of over 200 degree courses at 11 Partner Universities

Students receive £4000 per year bursary whilst at university

Starting training salary of circa £25,000 rising to £30,000 on completion of service training



Visit www.dsfc.ac.uk to order or download a prospectus and book a place on one of our upcoming Open Days.

Big day at Welbeck

PRIZEGIVING and the Annual General Inspection took place at Welbeck – The Defence Sixth Form College – in early July.

The event is the most prestigious in the college's calendar and marks the culmination of the year and the graduation of the Upper Sixth students.

The day started with a short service lead by Rev (Gp Capt) John R Ellis RAF, Deputy Chaplain-in-Chief (Personnel HQ Air Command).

Vice Admiral Duncan Potts, Chair of the Board of Governors, made the opening address, followed by the Principal, Peter Middleton, and Anna Soubry, MP for Broxtowe, who presented the Prizes.

After lunch the college's Annual General Inspection was taken by Maj Gen Robert Nitsch, Director Personnel, Army Board.

Parents and VIPs were treated to a military parade by almost 300 cadets, accompanied by the National Marching Band of the RAF Air Cadets.

For the Upper Sixth students this event marks the first milestone in their military careers, indicating the end of the first phase of the Defence Technical Officer and Engineer Entry Scheme.

They will now move on to their respective Defence Technical Undergraduate Scheme units and start reading for their technical or engineering degrees from one of 11 Partner Universities.

Consider options for affordable boarding

CHOOSE a state boarding school and save more than 50 per cent on fees.

Whilst boarding is an attractive option for many Naval families seeking stability in their children's education, some can find the ongoing costs prohibitive.

This is where state boarding, with fees of around £4,000 per term, is an attractive option. Fees are less than half the cost of comparable independent schools and well below the maximum Continuity of Education

Allowance.

Fees are kept at this more manageable level because the education is paid for by the state and parents are only asked to cover the cost of the boarding.

Already a popular choice with Forces families, military children make up around ten per cent of children in the state boarding system's 30-plus English schools.

Value doesn't, however, come at the cost of quality as state boarding facilities are now indistinguishable from those in

the independent sector following a £20m programme of investment in boarding accommodation.

Following the national curriculum, academic performance exceeds that of many other schools and state boarding schools regularly top league tables of results.

To find out more about the high-quality education, state-of-the-art facilities and exceptional pastoral care offered in the state boarding system, go to www.stateboarding.org.uk

Academic choice and an active life

THE Duke of York's Royal Military School upholds its traditions with pride and offers students a unique and iconic place to study for GCSEs and A-Levels.

In addition to a wide academic

choice, Dukies enjoy a full and active school life which includes camping in the Brecon Beacons, an excellent range of sports, music, dance and drama, and representing their school at special parades.

Gen James Bashall was Guest of Honour and Reviewing Officer at the annual Grand Day celebrations, when students paraded in full ceremonial uniform for the Trooping of the Colour ceremony led by the Dover school's impressive military band.

Many of the students have family in the Armed Forces and, as a personal touch, wear the cap badge of their parent's or family member's Service, Corps or Regiment over their hearts.

Prior to Grand Day, 30 students played a central part at a special service honouring the roles of Sir Winston Churchill and Gen Charles de Gaulle in World War 2.

They provided a Guard of Honour and Corps of Drums for the unveiling of two statues in Park Richelieu following a request to attend by British Embassy officials in Paris.

Sir Nicholas Soames MP, Churchill's grandson, inspected the school's guard of honour.

He also spoke with great warmth about the school, having visited in 2009 to act as Inspecting Officer for the drill competition parade, and present the Baroness Thatcher Sword of Honour.

The school's next open morning is on Saturday October 7; please call 01304 245073 to book, and visit the website at www.doyrms.com for more details.

with a theatre, lecture theatre, performing arts centre, Sixth Form centre, and observatory, together with fantastic sports facilities which include an artificial turf pitch, gym and swimming pool.

Being keen to educate the whole person, the school runs a wide range of extracurricular activities, both evenings and weekends, offering opportunities in the Combined Cadet Force and Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme, plus a broad range of sports, music and drama.

The school is located in the heart of the Weald of Kent, just 50 miles from London with excellent road links from both the M25 and M20.

Some places are available for Year 9 in September 2017 – contact the Registrar 01580 711804.

Facilities are impressive,

School aims to fulfil potential

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Fees are extremely attractive at just £12,726 per annum (Year 9) to £15,270 per annum (Year 12) for 2018.

Facilities are impressive,

Terrence went the extra mile – and won top learning award

A MARINE Society learner came away with a top prize at the prestigious Elective Learning Awards.

L/Cpl Terrence Blunt took IGCSE (International General Certificate of Secondary Education) history and GCSE law in the summer, having enrolled with the lifelong learning charity in September 2016.

L/Cpl Blunt, who was due to receive his results as Navy News went to press, was nominated for an award for his commitment to his studies, and won Top Achiever in the Elective Learner Domain category at the July ceremony.

The awards are intended to celebrate the success of Navy personnel who have gone the extra mile in learning and developing themselves.

Rachel Gurnett, Seafarer Education and Data

Co-ordinator at the Marine Society, said: "Terrence was highly committed to his studies, consistently handing in assignments on time.

"We are delighted that he won this well-deserved award and wish him all the best for his results and future studies."

The Marine Society aims to be the first in learning and professional development for seafarers, helping them to learn new skills and gain accredited qualifications.

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26th September	Year 9 Open Morning
27th September	Year 9 Open Morning
17th October	Year 7 Open Morning
8th November	Sixth Form Open Evening

For full details and to register your attendance please visit our website: www.cranbrookschool.co.uk/admissions/open-days or call: 01580 711800



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Ministry of Defence

*Fees are reviewed annually

Deaths

Capt Robert E de M Leathes. Joined as a Special Entry Cadet 1942 and served as a Midshipman in HMS Uganda (badly damaged Salerno) and Swift (sunk Normandy). Torrington, Vesper, Zephyr, Gabbard and Qualified Special Navigator 1949; also Hart (Korea), Coquette (FPO), Venus, Undine (Bith F9), Ganges, Ocean, Dryad, Eagle, Alert (as CO), FOFH, Victory (Cdr RNB), Nubian (as CO), ASWE, Glamorgan (as CO) and Alb. Appointed ADC 1976. June 29. Aged 93.

Cdr Edwin A Baldwin. HMS Daedalus, Heron, Fulmar, Seahawk, President, Falcon, Albion, Cockade, Sydney, RNAY Fleetlands, Fleet Work Study and Management Services also Mauritius and Min of Aviation. July 7. Aged 85.

Cdr Andrew G B Phillip. HMS Theseus, Falcon, Terror, President, Hornbill, Peregrine, Seahawk, Albatsar, Theseus, Royal Australian Navy. MOD Pers Services and Officer Appointments. June 30. Aged 92.

Cdr Toby P Streiffeld-James. HMS Warrior, Terror, Tiger, Leander, Collingwood, Sultan, Kenya, Forth, MOD DGNM and DCDS Ops, RNC Greenwich and HM Dockyard Portsmouth. July 19.

Lt Cdr Malcolm A E Bland. HMS Dryad, Vernon, Mercury II, Seahawk, Gannet, Excellent, Mean, Theseus, ASWE, MOD Dir Undersurface Warfare also 820 and 849 NAS. July 5. Aged 85.

Lt Cdr Peter A Trevillion RNR RDT. HMS Eaglet and Mersey Div RNR. July 18. Aged 88.

Lt Cdr Gordon H White. Dir Naval Foreign and Commonwealth Tg, HMS Nelson, Berwick, Sultan, Dainty, Centaur and AMEE Haslar. July.

Lt John F Vernon RNR. HMS Seahawk and Indefatigable also 820, 849, 854 and 857 NAS. June 17. Aged 93.

Sub Lt Jack Thomas RNR. 766, 744, 798 and 836 NAS. 2017.

Lt John E Hendrick. HMS Salisbury (67), Vernon (69), Bossington (71), XO of Wilton (72-73), Drake (75). Mine warfare & Clearance Diving Officers' Association. July 9.

Brian Green, WO(WEA). Served

Ask Jack

HMS Venomous. The son of Lt William R Forster RNR, HMS Venomous, is tracing the families of the men who served aboard this V&W-class destroyer that brought the Welsh and Irish Guards back from Boulogne on May 23 1940 and made five trips to the beaches and North Mole at Dunkirk to bring back 4,100 troops and Generals Alexander and Percival. He would like to offer them an opportunity to tell their family stories of Dunkirk on his website about Venomous, which is an extension of the book he published in May. A crew list for May 30 1940 can be seen on his website: www.hollywellhousepublishing.co.uk/CrewList-30May1940.html. Bill Forster can be contacted on 01272 838595 or email venomous@holywellhousepublishing.co.uk

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NAVY NEWS

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1949-67. Joined HMS Fisgard as an Artificer Apprentice, Entry Series 7. Completed Artificer training HMS Caledonia, then Apollo, Drake, Vernon, Vanguard, Lincoln, Sea Eagle, Tiger, Maidstone, Baker, Polaris, Narvik, Neptune, Fisgard Association and The Magnificent 7. May 17. Aged 84.

Donald 'Don' Loveridge CPOA. Served 1952-75 HMS Ocean, Drake, Goldcrest, Burghhead Bay, Phoenicia, Wizard, Carysfort, Ariadne and Heron. June 26. Aged 82.

Brian Lambley Able Seaman.

Served 1959-65.

Trained as a Radar Operator and joined HMS Bulwark (1960-61) where he also played in the volunteer band, Hermes (62-63). Dryad, Cochrane and at Haverfordwest. Blue Jacket Band in Portsmouth. May 14. Aged 75.

Ivor 'Shiner' Wright Chief Stoker.

Served HMS Dodman Point and Shefield. Aug 1. Aged 90.

Jack 'Mac' McHale. Served 1952-

62 HMS Ganges, Implacable, Decoy, Drake, Cockade, Victory, Trafalgar and Brocklesby. Keen sportsman particularly boxing and running. 8th Destroyer Squadron Association. Dec 2. Aged 79.

Clifford 'Cliff' J Amis CPO(OPS).

Served 1957-82 HMS London, Londonderry, Blake, Dryad, Paladin and Keppel. April 29. Aged 75.

'Nick' Carter. Joined as a boy seaman 1932 and served in submarines, Coastal Forces and the China Fleet. Aboard HMS Southampton at the Battle of Narvik and one of the seamen put ashore to assist an Army unit and later taken off from Bodø after some difficulty. Also served HMS Emerald, Ardmossan and Vesper; invalided out 1944. HMS Vesper Association (Skipton's World War 2 adopted warship) and Coastal Forces Association. July 25. Aged 99.

Royal Naval Association

Vernon Elphick, Cheshunt branch.

July 23. Aged 92.

Kenyon Mansfield CRs. Served 1942-75 HMS St George, Onslaught, Scylla, Fowey, Pepys, Amethyst, Venerable, Implacable, Fierce, Vanguard, Newfoundland, Ceylon, Kenya, Gambla, Birmingham, Bermuda, Mercury and Staff CRs to Nottingham RNR. Norwich branch. Aug 9. Aged 92.

Sally 'Sarah' Wright (nee Jones) PO WRNS. Served 1943-51. Represented the RN and WRNS at tennis, Axminster RNA for over 35 years. August 10. Aged 95.

Association of RN Officers/RNOC

Cdr Michael L C Crawford DSC.

HMS St Albion, Dryad, Dolphin, Forth, Tyne, Loch Fada, President, Vanguard, Indomitable, Artemis, Hawke, Tireless, Unseen, Upholder, Sealion. Victory RNB. June 28. Aged 100.

Cdr Geoffrey G Meekums. HMS Daedalus, Ark Royal, Tiger, Victorious, Fulmar, Heron, Blake, President, Eagle, Seahawk, Hermes, FOCAS, RAE Farnborough and MOD DGA(N). July 7.

Lt Cdr Peter H Dunn. HMS Dryad, Vernon, Mercury, Reclaim, Osprey, Cavendish, Daring, Rambur, Vigo, Loch Traalaig, Carron, Cochran, BRNC Dartmouth and MOD Dir Undersurface

926297.

HMS Trafalgar. Reunion to be held in Portsmouth Friday and Saturday Oct 27 and 28. Further information from 'Taff' Pugh on 07971 812820.

April 2018

HMS Ledbury, HMS Brecon and RMS St Helena Falklands 1982. A reunion is being arranged to take place at the 4th Menzies Strathallan Hotel, Birmingham, from Friday March 30 to Sunday April 1. Contact organiser Ian McVitie on 07769 149612 or email ianmcvitie@outlook.com

May 2018

HMS Broadsword Association.

Bi-annual reunion and AGM to take place over the weekend of Friday May 18 to Sunday May 20 in the Mercure Hotel, Holland House, Bristol. Anyone who served on board HMS Broadsword welcome. Further information available on our website www.hmsbroadswordassociation.co.uk or contact Steve Bullock at Steve.bullock@blueyonder.co.uk

Sports Lottery

July 8: £5,000 - CPO A McClelland; £1,800 - AB J Oakes; £800 - CPO E O'Malley; £600 - Lt Cdr L Chadfield; £500 - Lt L Dietz; £400 - AB C McIntyre. July 15: £5,000 - Cdr N Gibbons; £1,800 - CPO M Myers; £800 - PO A Green; £500 - Mne J Carter; £500 - AB S Hudson; £400 - Capt M Williams. July 22: £5,000 - PO P Andrews; £1,800 - PO J Tomney; £800 - Mne A Phillips; £500 - Sub Lt W Jones; £500 - Lt F Chandler; £400 - PO S Ferguson. July 29: £5,000 - AB L Stephen; £1,800 - AB S Hackney; £800 - Mne K Toychev; £500 - Cpl D Roberts; £500 - Cdr A Norgate; £400 - PO S Harrison.

Talking Navy News

Navy News is available free of charge as a digital file on memory stick or email from Portsmouth Area Talking News for those with difficulty reading normal type. Contact 07770 088388 and leave a message, or email studio@ptn.org.uk. A speaker that will take a USB plug is required but this can be obtained from the Talking News, or the file can be played back through a computer.

Submissions for the Deaths, Reunions and Swap Draft columns in October's Noticeboard must be received by September 13

Lectures reveal frigate's history



● Clare Hunt, Curator of the National Museum of the Royal Navy Hartlepool, in front of HMS Trincomalee

THE 200-year history of HMS Trincomalee is being celebrated through a series of lectures.

The National Museum of the Royal Navy (NMRN) Hartlepool organised the programme to shed light on Trincomalee's story since she was built in Mumbai, formerly Bombay, India, in 1817, until she docked in Hartlepool in 1987.

The teak-hulled frigate is currently Britain's oldest warship still afloat and forms part of the National Museum fleet, which also includes HMS Victory and Belfast's HMS Caroline.

Each 30-minute lecture is being delivered by Clare Hunt, Curator of the National Museum Hartlepool, with the first two being held last month.

Clare said: "HMS Trincomalee is one of the UK's national treasures and we are honoured to have her docked in the North East, so it is vitally important to champion the ship's prestige.

"Our series of lectures will delve into HMS Trincomalee's rich history and will each look into various sections of her journey from Mumbai to Hartlepool over the last 200 years.

"We are always looking at ways to promote HMS Trincomalee and support Hartlepool's leisure and tourism economy through events showcasing and celebrating the ship, and these lectures aren't to be missed."

Helen Loynes, Fundraising Manager for the National Museum Hartlepool, said: "The lectures are a fun and informative way of celebrating the rich

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One for the WRNS album

FORMER Royal Navy women gather for photographer Keith Woodland, following an afternoon tea at HMS Collingwood.

The event, held in the Wardroom, was organised to mark the centenary of the Women's Royal Naval Service.

Cdr Heather Rimmer, Training Support Commander at the Fareham base, welcomed 140 guests – women who had joined the WRNS, together with a small contingent of those still serving.

Carole Simpson, an ex-LWren(MT) and POWren(ETS), said: "It's lovely to see such a good turn-out despite the bad weather."

Rona Marsden, an ex-POWren (RS), said that the event was "brilliant" and that it had been wonderful to meet other generations of Wrens.

After thanking those involved, Cdr Rimmer addressed the visitors, recognising the achievements of the women in the WRNS and Senior Service to date, and anticipating those yet to come.

The event was organised by Sara Knowles, an ex-POWren(ETS) currently working in the Learning and Development Centre, HMS Collingwood, and CPO Debbie Faben, of Victory Squadron, HMS Collingwood.

They joined the WRNS together in 1986, and



along with Cdr Rimmer – another blue-badged Wren – were inundated with compliments for organising the event, which included a raffle that raised £1,000 towards the WRNS Benevolent Trust.

Former members of the WRNS were invited to enjoy Ceremonial Divisions at HMS Sultan as part of WRNS100 celebrations.

Former director of WRNS and President of the Association of Wrens, Commandant Mrs Anthena Larken, joined Guest of Honour Vice Admiral Sir Simon

Lister as he inspected the personnel on the parade ground with the CO of HMS Sultan, Capt Peter Towell.

Among the guests was Lyn Gannon, who served as a CPO Wtr from 1976-2000.

"My favourite draft of all was when I worked with the Royal Marines in Centurion – they were good times," she said.

"Another time I will never forget was in 1990 when I was chosen as one of ten Wrens selected as part of the Queen Mother's 90th anniversary parade, where I was also chosen to meet her afterwards.

"That memory will remain with me until my dying day. I would never have done it unless I had been in the Navy – it's the best thing I ever did."

Day out with FAA

THE home of the Fleet Air Arm is opening its doors to serving and former Servicewomen to mark the centenary of the Women's Royal Naval Service.

RNAS Yeovilton will host a celebration of WRNS on Friday November 17, 2017.

The day will begin with tea in the Wardroom, and end with a three-course dinner – for details of the day's programme, see poster (left).

Tickets, priced at £50, are available from September 5.

For details and an application form contact Laura.easter260@mod.uk, LWtr Cane, UPO, RNAS Yeovilton, Ilchester BA22 8HT or telephone PO Nicola Stirzaker on 01935 456546.

■ A 'Pimms and Proms' event at the FAA Memorial Church, Yeovilton, on Thursday September 28 will also celebrate and support WRNS100.

£10 tickets for the event, which features the HMS Heron Volunteer Band, include a "glass of Pimms, a flag and nibbles".

More details are available from the RNAS Yeovilton Chaplaincy on 01935 455257 or email navyyeo-chaplaincyshared@mod.uk

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- 1430 - 1730 Fleet Air Arm Museum visit & Flight Deck Service
- 1830 - 1900 Welcome Drinks in the Senior Rates Mess
- 1915 Three Course Dinner & Gift, followed by Evening Entertainment

Tickets will be available for sale from Tuesday 5 September.

For more information and an application form contact:

Email: Laura.easter260@mod.uk
Tel: PO Nicola Stirzaker on 01935 456546

Closing date for applications will be 01 November 2017 (applications will be on a first come, first served basis)

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Pride high for Lions Down Under



IT PROVED to be a life-changing experience on and off the field of play for the players and staff of the United Kingdom Armed Forces Rugby League side as they finished third in the Armed Forces World Cup in Australia.

Five of the 24-man squad were selected from the Royal Navy. The team captain's armband went to LAET Ben Taylor, with ET Mike Haldenby, LETME James Parry, AB Ryan Matthews – who was nominated for team of the tournament by the event organisers – and AET Luke Cooper also taking part in the four-match contest based in Sydney.

Talking after the final whistle of his team's 36-18 third and fourth place play-off win over New Zealand at Ringrose Park, Wentworthville, LAET Taylor said: "We have showed great attitude and effort and that has been here throughout. What we have lacked is execution.

"I think the tour as a whole has been disappointing, but we have gone out on a high – two wins over the Kiwis, who are a rugby playing nation, whereas we are more a football playing one, is something I think we deserve some credit for.

"I don't think we clicked and showed exactly what we can do, but we've rallied and got third so I am happy with that and happy for the lads and everyone involved."

The team battled back from two opening match defeats against eventual tournament winners Fiji and Australia to not only raise their games and salvage some pride from the tournament, but they also found time to visit a children's hospital in Sydney and carry out a schools training camp in Parramatta.

They also spent a morning watching the South Sydney Rabbitohs, driven by the powerhouse Sam Burgess, who then found time to chat and share a few laughs with the team, along with giving them some advice on their upcoming clash against NZ, before Taylor, who is also better known as YouTube phenomenon Yorkshire Prose, performed an impromptu poem for the club's players.

LETME Parry said: "All tour we've been fighting for and working for that spark, that moment. Everything we've been doing in training all come to fruition today. Our set pieces were right, our defence was a lot tighter, we stuck at what we were going to do, but despite small patches we worked and worked and we worked.

"I have felt the lads progressing throughout the tour, and now we have reached this point we can kick on from here. It's always going to be hard – we come from three Services; to get that to gel is difficult, but we've done that. We've got friends for life and a common bond – this jersey. We have all achieved something in this jersey, memories have been made – just singing the National Anthem with these lads makes memories for life.

"It's not what we came here to do, finish third, – we came here to win, but we will go home with our heads held high."

Buoyed by a good series of warm-up matches the tri-Service team headed for Sydney looking to wrest the trophy from the hosts, but a 40-20 defeat at the hands of tournament's eventual winners Fiji, who crushed Australia 44-12 in the final at the Pepper Stadium, was compounded by a poor display completely out of character with the side trying to play an expansive style of rugby rather than sticking to their well-drilled game plan.

The scoring began after a lost pass by Cpl James Hutchinson, followed by a second try after a poor penalty, which meant the UK team were 12 points down after 18 minutes.

When powerhouse Selvania Koroi ran over the defence to score for 22-0 the team looked dead and buried before the half-hour mark.

The resilience shown to run a brilliantly worked try on 32 minutes as SAC(T) Adam Flinham kicked well to force the Fijians back, before a brilliant reverse pass put Sgt Dave Hankinson in for one of two tries in the tournament, would be the building block for the team's gallant charge to third overall.

A bright restart saw SAC Jordan Andrade run in with AB Matthews converting his second

attempt for a 24-12 scoreline. The team then lost Mne Birdsall to an horrendous tackle, which saw him carried off.

Sgt Si Gray then started his try-a-game scoring run, touching down out wide. Missing the conversion, AB Matthews then converted his own try as the Fijians continued to pick up points until the final whistle.

Facing a must-win clash against the hosts at the Cabramatta New Era Stadium, the Lions took the fight to the Australians, blitzing their defensive line with attack after attack early on, and with the hosts visibly shaken Wray popped up to score on 10 minutes, following AB Matthews's stunning cross-field kick, which he then converted.

Unfazed as Australia pegged back the score five minutes later, Sgt Lee Queeley showed great hands to score after 20 minutes, with AB Matthews failing to add the extras.

Gnr Ben Rowan clipped over a penalty that was long overdue coming from the very lenient Australian referee, but from here the scoring stopped, the penalty count began to rise and a second-half display akin to the opening clash saw the men in white sunk 38-12, ending any hopes of a World Cup final berth.

With the toll of three games in eight days head coach Clayton called on his assistant player/manager Chf Tech Garry Dunn and, making history as the first Service player to appear in all three world cups so far, Dunn duly capped his side's winning performance with a try.

From the off, a tit-for-tat clash provided brilliant entertainment for the neutral, but from a UK perspective the 40-30 win was held together by three key moments – a brace of tries on his World Cup debut from SAC Sam Breeze and a 75th minute wonder tackle from Gnr Rowan that stopped a certain try and was heralded a game-changer.

Queeley got the scoring under way with a second-minute unconverted try, and eight minutes later Dunn slotted a clever pass to Pte Micky Hoyle, with Rowan kicking the extras.

The men in black finally got on the score sheet after 28 minutes through Logan Afoa.

AB Ryan Matthews scores a try for the UKAFRL side in Australia

Andrade made his presence felt by scoring after the restart, with Breeze then being set up by Andrade. Rowan kicked the extras for a 20-6 lead, with the Kiwis running in a converted try for a 20-12 half-time score.

Andrade then set up Cpl Steve Wicks to score straight after the break, with Rowan converting, but New Zealand kept themselves in it with another try, before Dunn got on to the score sheet with Wray making it 34-16 after Ryan Letterman went over for the Kiwis in between.

A further New Zealand converted score got nerves jangling, before an unconverted try was snuffed out as Breeze ended the scoring with Rowan converting, meaning it was down to the Wentworthville, Ringrose Park ground to decide who was left with the wooden spoon.

On the day an aggressive opening from the men in black failed to have an impact on the UK men, who produced an impressive display in hot conditions to win 36-18 and seal third place.

The bruising opening gave the Kiwis a six-point lead, but the UK side replied through SAC Josh Scott, who touched down Spr Kev Brown's grubber kick, which AB Matthews converted.

The score caused panic in the New Zealand ranks, with Wray seeing a try disallowed before Cfn George Clarke dummied to score under the posts, which Matthews again converted.

Desperate to get into the break without any further scoring, the Kiwi side were caught out trying to run down the clock as Hankinson, sporting a heavily bandaged nose, touched down for an unconverted score.

AB Matthews converted his own try, with Wray touching down to cancel out an early New Zealand score after the break for 26-12.

A moment of cheeky brilliance from the terrier-like Brown saw him run in from acting half-back to extend the Lions' lead, with Clarke completing his brace of tries on 74 minutes with a stunning twisting try on the line, which Hankinson slotted over – and third place was secured.

Report: Dan Abrahams, RAF News;
Pictures: Gordon Elias



From left, AET Luke Cooper against Fiji; LAET Ben Taylor runs at the Australians; LAET Taylor and LETME James Parry on the attack; Members of the UKAFRL squad visit children in hospital in Sydney



Great gig for young rowers

A GIG crew from Britannia Royal Naval College became one of only two British teams to take part in a new race held on an historic lake in Holland.

A ten-strong team from Dartmouth took part in the first Cornish pilot gig race to be held on the Bosbaan, a purpose-built lake built in the 1930s and used as an Olympic rowing venue and by the Dutch national rowing squad.

It was the BRNC team's first international regatta – and the first time they had competed in a mixed-crew event.

After training races in Weymouth, Teignmouth, and Cattewater, the college crew looked strong going into the event, and it showed as they qualified for the A final with the third fastest time from a total of 18 crews.

A strong start in the final race saw the crew cross the halfway mark in third place, but in a tough battle over the last 1,000 metres they were pipped to the line and finished fourth overall.

Lt Cdr John Barry said: "I don't think anyone expected the Naval College team to be so competitive. The Royal

Netherlands Yacht Club were fantastic hosts."

Ft Lt Mark Dunstan, officer-in-charge of the college gig team, said: "This is my third season rowing with the college, and this is the strongest crew I've rowed with."

"It's fantastic that we've been given the opportunity to race as a mixed crew, particularly in such an historic location."

The event was organised by The Royal Netherlands Yacht Club and featured teams from across the country as well as a crew from Nankersy in Cornwall.

Howzat! Seahawk make it a hat-trick

CRICKETERS from HMS Seahawk beat HMS Excellent to take the Royal Navy knockout cricket competition title for a record third successive season.

Seahawk won the toss and opted to bat first in the 35-over match at Burnaby Road in Portsmouth.

PO Andy Bonnett and AET Luke Clarke got the visitors off to a great start, with PO Bonnett making an unbeaten 105 to take the man of the match award. AET Clarke hit 41 before being given out LBW.

Seahawk's captain LACMN Carl Woolnough made a quickfire 48, which included several huge sixes, and POACMN Jamie Strachen ended up 13 not out.

The team from RNAS Culdrose batted the full 35 overs, finishing on 234 for 4.

HMS Excellent went into bat after tea, but fell to the bowling of LACMN Carl Woolnough and LAET Martin Gooderham.

Excellent were 55 for 5 off 14 overs and the arrival of bowler AET Clarke heralded more misery.

He finished with figures of five wickets off five overs for a mere 13 runs.



• PO Andy Bonnett was man of the match

The Portsmouth side finished 94 all out, meaning Seahawk won by a huge 140 runs.

Long-serving Seahawk team manager CPOACMN JJ Walker (rtd), who has been involved in eight of the team's Navy Cup finals over the last 16 years, said: "This is by far the most emphatic, and satisfying final Seahawk have won, and to set a new Royal Navy record along the way has just topped things off."

"Could we go on and win four? Why not?"

Men triumph for third year in pool

THE Royal Navy Men's Swimming Team retained the Inter-Service Championship title for the third successive year.

POACMN Liam Armstrong and Mne Lee Ormerod got the side off to a flying start with silver and bronze respectively in the opening race, the 800m freestyle.

The 100m butterfly saw debutant AB Dan Jones and Mne Ash Dougan achieve second and third place, while team manager LPT Stu Mantle got second and Lt Cdr Joel Roberts was fourth in the 200m backstroke.

Mne Andy Egan picked up silver in the 100m breaststroke, while debutant OC Charlie Faed finished fifth.

The fifth event of the competition, the 400m freestyle, saw AB Martin Bosson produce one of the swims of the day. Leading from the outset, he secured the first gold for the team with Mne Ormerod securing another bronze medal.

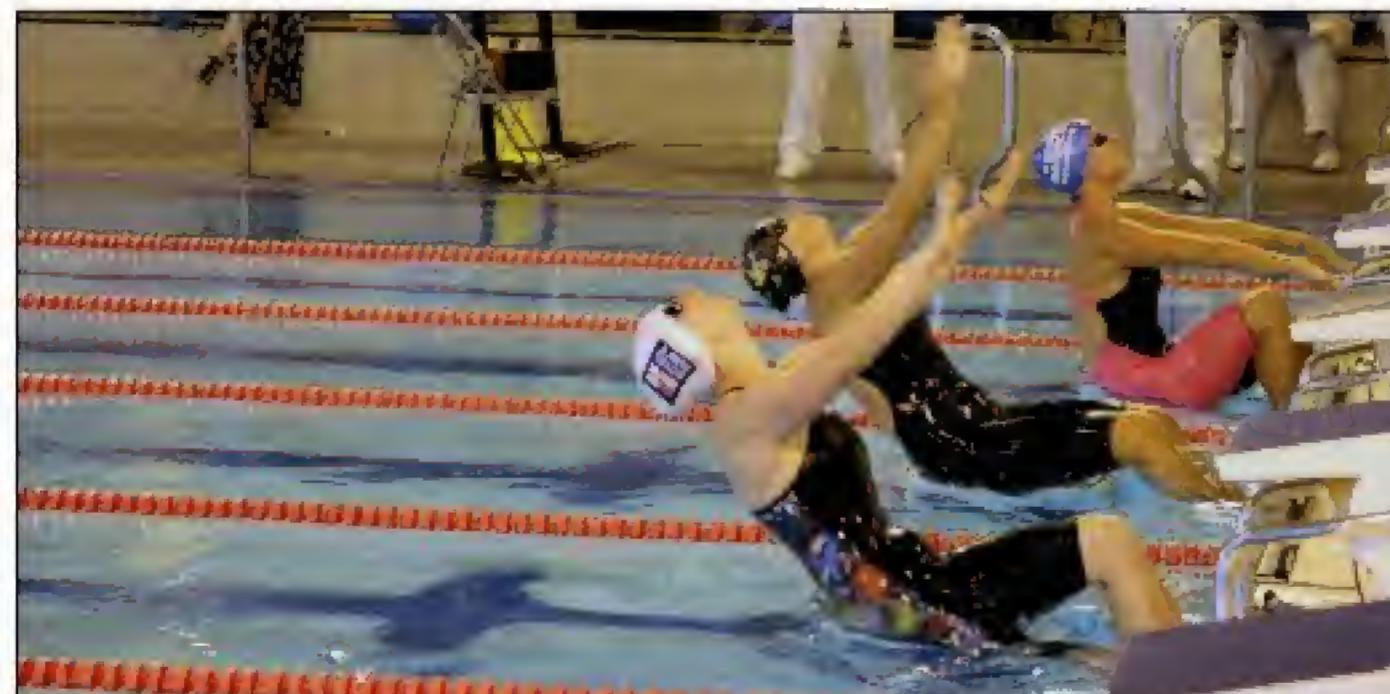
The 200m individual medley saw the Royal Navy gain ground over the RAF and Army, with AB Jones and Mne Dougan once again producing outstanding swims to secure second and third places respectively.

With the RAF getting a swimmer disqualified, the RN had an eight-point lead. The team built on this with excellent swims from Mne Dave Godridge and Sub Lt Ewan Simpson, placing first and third respectively in the 100m freestyle.

The RN then suffered a setback with two disqualifications in the next two events, which enabled the RAF to draw level.

The 200m freestyle saw yet another excellent swim from POACMN Armstrong and a further bronze for AB Bosson, followed by a gold and silver in the 50m freestyle for Mne Godridge and Mne Liam Spruce.

A loaded RAF medley team



• The start of the women's backstroke at the Inter-Service Swimming Championships at Aldershot

saw them take the penultimate event, cutting the RN's overall lead, meaning that the whole competition would be determined by the outcome of the final event.

Ultimately, it was the strength in depth of the RN team that ensured success in the 6x50m freestyle relay. Mne Ormerod, AB Brad Horsfall, Mne Alex Rea, AB Bosson, Mne Spruce and Mne Godridge led from the start, narrowly missing out on the event record by only 0.15 seconds but securing the Inter-Service title.

Missing a few key swimmers meant 2017 was going to be a tough year for the Royal Navy Women's swimming team.

The first event saw Lt Emma Miles and AB Rebecca Bayley go in the 400m freestyle.

At the halfway point it was neck-and-neck, with one RAF swimmer out front.

The third 100m saw Lt Miles make her move and break clear of the pack, overtake the RAF swimmer to take first place,

with AB Bayley finishing sixth.

Next up were LNN Sam Eagle and ET(ME) Rachel Barber in the 100m freestyle.

Aiming to defend her title, LNN Eagle led from the outset and came home to beat the opposition by over two seconds. A second gold for the team and a fifth place from ET(ME) Barber saw the women in second behind the Army after two events.

LNN Eagle took silver in the 100m backstroke and AB Libby Francis matched her in the 100m butterfly.

Bronze medals were won by Lt Miles in the 200m backstroke and AB Bayley in the 200m freestyle.

Consistent performances from the team of Lt Cat Pease, Sub Lt Hana Rabuzin, Bd Cpl Caitlin O'Malley, AB Ruth Roberts, AET Emily Newton and NA(SE) Nicola Roder ensured that points continued to be accumulated.

The 4x50m freestyle relay saw ET(ME) Barber start well, enabling AB Bayley to take over with all three teams in

contention. The Army and RN teams began to pull away from the RAF with the Army edging ahead.

On completion of AB Francis's third leg the Army built a two-second lead over the RN.

Last to go was LNN Eagle, who closed the Army swimmer down to within 0.5 second, but the team had to settle for a close second behind the Army.

The Army were once again crowned the women's Inter-Service champions for the 20th year running with the RAF second and RN third.

Next for the Royal Navy Swimming Team is the Inter-Service Open Water Championships at Boscombe Beach, Bournemouth, on September 13.

The event is open to all RN regular and reservist personnel. Anyone interested in competing in the event, both wetsuit and non-wetsuit swimmers, should contact Lt Emma Miles at NAVYPCAP-CMENG5503@mod.uk



Record-breakers

RUGBY players from HMS Somerset emerged as victors to give their ship the honour of being the first vessel to win the Royal Navy Rugby Union Plate.

With a complement of less than 180, the ship's team faced a massive task to beat HMS Heron at the Rectory in Plymouth.

But having beaten a team from HMS Queen Elizabeth, confidence was high among the men from the Type 23.

It was deep in the second half before Somerset started to get

the upper hand – three late tries from ETME Josh Tweedie, Sub Lt Josh Ellis and skipper AB Ben Borman gave Somerset a 39-17 victory.

Somerset's Commanding Officer, Cdr Tim Berry, said: "The desire to win and the mutual respect shown by both teams today was a huge credit to the individuals and Navy sport.

To have a frigate-sized ship win this trophy against a big shore establishment was a truly excellent achievement."

Referees are ready

MATCH officials from Scottish Rugby were put through their paces at HM Naval Base Clyde ahead of the start of the Scottish Rugby Union season.

The event, which was aimed at promoting team-building and communication, was the latest in a series of training opportunities between the Naval Base and Scottish Rugby Union's governing body.

Cdr Dunx McClement of HM Naval Base Clyde – himself a rugby referee – extended the invitation to the match officials who were hosted by PTIs and members of 43 Cdo Fleet Protection Group.

"The day took the referees out of both their physical and mental

comfort zones," he said. "Keith Allen, one of the referees who took part, told me that it was one of the hardest but most rewarding activities that he has done during his time with the Scottish Rugby Elite Panel."

Dave Pearson, Scottish Rugby's High Performance Referee Manager, said: "Being able to draw on the experience of the Royal Navy physical trainers and the 43 Commando personnel has been a fantastic opportunity for the referees, and will serve them well for the forthcoming season."

The group comprised 12 referees and five support staff, and included referees who will officiate in cup contests.

Players of the future

A NUMBER of girls took part in a Royal Navy netball coaching session at the Women's England Netball Academy.

Several of the students expressed an interest in careers in the Senior Service.

During the week Royal Marines also gave lessons in nutrition and how to prepare and cook meals.

Personnel from Commando Training Centre also conducted a Marines afternoon, during which students learned about the ration box, going into battle and team-building activities.

In the swim (plus a bike ride and run)

TEAMS from the Army, Navy and RAF competed in the annual Officers' Association Inter-Services Triathlon at Cotswold Water Park.

The RAF won both the men's and women's individual races, while the Army dominated the team categories.

The event, sponsored by the Officers' Association, was organised this year by the RAF Triathlon Association.

Competitors swam through 1.5km of open water, cycled 41km of tricky terrain and finished the course with a 10km run. The rain added an extra challenge, making the road and track slippery.

SAC Luke Pollard completed the race in one hour, 54 minutes and 40 seconds, and Fit Lt Lucy Nell finished in two hours, 11 minutes and 44 seconds. It is the third time both have won the contest.

Luke said: "Winning for a third time is as exciting as the first. I always work hard towards the OA Inter-Services Triathlon. It's a race that always carries a lot of prestige. I'm so pleased to take the title for another year. It was great to see so many competitors out there taking on the challenging course. I'm already looking forward to 2018's race!"

Lucy said: "To compete in the OA Inter-Services Triathlon was fun. The atmosphere is always highly competitive, and it's fantastic to compete alongside so many talented ladies, all of whom are extremely passionate about representing their Service. I was delighted to win for the RAF."

The Army won all three team awards: veteran male, open male and open female. In addition, the Army won both veteran individual awards. The fastest male and female veterans were WO 2 Philip Westoby and Maj Karen Peck. Lt Henry 'Harry' Eaton, from the Army, and Lucy Nell won the fastest male and female officer awards.

The Police, Fire Brigade and Prison Service competed as guests.

The OA also entered a relay team: Lee Holloway, OA Chief Executive, swam; Steve Chisnall, an Officers' Association Trustee and former Air Vice-Marshal,

cycled and Kate Tripp, a former Squadron Leader, ran.

For the full results visit dbmaxresults.co.uk.



Life's a beach

Picture: Keith Woodland



Sports teams leave circles in the sand

SUMMER and time for the beach. Sportsmen and women didn't need telling twice as they competed in two Royal Navy contests on the sands of Weymouth.

Seven sides took part in a Royal Navy Football Association tournament, while Royal Navy Rugby Union had 13 men's teams competing in the town's beach festival, with seven RN women's sides doing battle in a touch-rugby contest.

A league and knock-out contest was the order of the day for the footballers, with the league honours going to HMS Albion, who took the title from their colleagues from HMS Ocean on goal difference.

The knock-out contest saw victory go to trainees from HMS Sultan – who finished sixth in the league.

Sultan took on Albion in the final, which ended in a sudden-death penalty shoot-out.

The young guns from the Gosport base won the cup on penalties, before running into the sea and celebrating.

Teams also represented were: HMS Daring, Ocean, RNAS Yeovilton, 846 NAS and Viking Squadron Royal Marines. Excellent refereeing was also on display from Cdre Rupert Wallace and AB Dan Blinks.

The RNFA will be returning to Weymouth beach for the summer of 2018 for another Beach Soccer Tournament.

To stay in touch with all upcoming events, check out the RNFA Facebook page and website, royalnavyfa.com.

■ The home of the England national football sides was the venue as the Royal Navy Football Association hosted a six-a-side contest.

Five teams from HMS Nelson, Heron, Eaglet, Medical Services and 45 Cdo took part in an over-30s competition at St George's Park in Staffordshire.

The contest adopted a league and cup format at the indoor 3G arena, with each side playing a minimum of 80 minutes, and it was HMS Nelson who emerged victors.

The players finished the tournament with a tour of the national football team facilities.

■ The beach rugby festival involved matches of four minutes a half, with a 30-second respite. Using rolling subs, each team fielded five players.

'Tap and go' replaced the more technical aspects of the game (scrum and lineout) and there was a no-kicking rule in force; the stress was on fast,



● Footballers from HMS Albion and HMS Sultan do battle on the beach at Weymouth

expansive, open rugby, though that didn't stop zealous rucking, mauling and strong tackling.

The four women's teams played a round-robin of touch rugby with the top two teams in the final.

In the pool stages HMS Seahawk took League 1 with two wins and draw.

League 2 saw Heron 'A' confirm their position as favourites for the tournament with a strong showing (tried for 19, tries against 2).

League 3, the largest league consisting of five teams, was closely contested by BRNC and Viking Sqn, with the Officer Cadets topping the group. In the women's pool the barbarian nature of 'HMS Mixi-Blob' caused surprise by coming first (try count back).

So to the knock-out stages, where all of a sudden things turned serious as silverware was that bit closer. A good showing from the ships saw Somerset, Daring and Sutherland all make the quarter-finals, only for their journeys to halt there.

Viking Sqn played well to defeat compatriots 42 Cdo and as the only non-establishment in the semi-finals they were unfortunate as Seahawk denied them by one try.

In the second semi Heron 'A' and BRNC had a bruising encounter. The air station's experience shone through as they took the tie 5-3.

Pitch 2 was surrounded for the women's final, a match though non-contact that was equally robustly contested. Ocean 'B' took the plaudits over BRNC.

The final of the men's tournament was played on the pitch closest to Weymouth Pavilion.

An attritional confrontation followed with Seahawk taking a try advantage into the half-time break.

A composed Heron returned to the fray and in the dying seconds of normal time scored to make it level at the whistle.

The match was decided in extra time with the final say from Heron as they retained the trophy.

LAET winner secures victory in cup competition

TWO tough and testing back-to-back matches saw the UKAF football team cover themselves in glory, with a great defensive display and a late winning thunder strike from the Royal Navy's LAET Danny Earle.

Succumbing to a 2-0 defeat at the hands of Conference side Oxford City, coach FS Nic de-Long's charges then sank Bristol City U23s 2-1 to round off a great few days for the defending Kentish Cup side.

LAET Earle said: "It's been a great experience stepping up to the UKAF team after featuring in the Navy under 23s and senior team last season."

"It's great to be playing the highest level of military football with a group of lads who are incredible on and off the pitch and made me feel welcome the moment I got there."

"In terms of the goal I'm just glad the first one is out the way and I hope more will follow."

Setting his team up in a 4-3-2-1 formation, de-Long returned Cpl Tom Claisse to the role of captain, and pressing well early on the military team were scuppered by a light penalty decision after 17 minutes.

Minutes later Cpl Mike Campbell saw a good chance

cleared, with SIG Luke Noble going close, then on 39 minutes Army man Pte Josh Hughes lashed in the equaliser.

An inspired shuffle of his pack from de-Long saw L/Cpl Pete Williams introduced in the 77th minute and after steadying the ship, he then found LAET Earle out on the left wing.

The Navy man lashed home a stunning winner after cutting inside the penalty box and firing past the goalkeeper.

Follow the team on Twitter @UKArmedForcesFA.

Victory makes it a tennis double



● The winning team with coach Kevin Baker and team captain Cdr Nigel Bowen

THE Royal Navy men's tennis team are Inter-Service champions again, repeating their success of 2015 by beating the Army and RAF in a closely-fought contest.

The victory at Edgbaston Priory in Birmingham is especially sweet because the RN also won the Inter-Service B (indoor) tournament in April.

This brings to ten the total of Inter-Service titles won since 2009; all under the captain/coach combination of Cdr Nigel Bowen and Kevin Baker.

Prior to the contest, the Navy squad assembled in Portsmouth for the annual RN tennis championships. The men's singles title was won by LET(WESM) Scott Nicholls, and the doubles competition was clinched by Lt Dev Chowdhury and L/Cpl James Herbert.

A confident RN team fancied their chances at Edgbaston but was pushed hard by the Army during the singles matches on the first day.

Playing the Inter-Service A tournament for the first year, AET Ciaran Losh comfortably won his first match against the RAF No 2 player before rain stopped play. Continuing indoors, Ciaran's big hitting was very effectively neutralized on the slower surface by his next (Army) opponent – which led to a narrow loss.

RN No 3 player Mne James Scales had an equally close contest against his Army opponent, who managed to save a match point and won the dual in a third set tie-break. James managed to defeat the RAF No 3 player later in the day.

The hero of the first day, however, was Scott Nicholls. Playing at No 1, he beat Sqn Ldr

Chris Evans in straight sets, having been 5-2 down in the second set.

The second day doubles started well, with the RN third pair of AET Losh and Mne Nathan Jackson beating the Army.

The No 2 pair of Lt Chowdhury and L/Cpl Herbert beat the RAF in three sets and also won a tight three-set contest against the Army.

The RN No 1 pair of LET Nicholls and Mne Scales won comfortably against their RAF opponents and by midway through the day the Royal Navy were ahead of the Army.

It would all come down to the final match between the Army and RAF, with the airmen taking the game in three sets.

If you are interested in playing, contact your PT department or email RNLTAs secretary at navynps-peoplesptrns01@mod.uk

Navy gymnasts hold on to coveted British title

ROYAL Navy gymnasts retained their British Champions title as well as picking up a clutch of medals.

Five of the team took part in three disciplines – trampoline, tumbling and men's artistic – and picked up a bronze in the tumbling contest.

But the title everyone at the Lilleshall National Sports Centre in Shropshire was after was that of British champions – and the Royal Navy team held on to the crown that they won last year.

The bronze-medal winning tumbling team consisted of Lt Cdr Kevin Westbrook, LET Keiron Ellison, POET Ben Wright and CPOPT Keith McCormick.

Lt Cdr Westbrook finished in second place in the individual category, with LET Ellison picking up a bronze medal. The remaining two team members finished in eighth and ninth places.

"This was my first ever competition on all six pieces of apparatus and I pushed myself to include a new move on each piece – I was particularly pleased with my back somersault dismount on the parallel bars," said Lt Cdr Westbrook.

LET Ellison also finished in fifth spot in the trampolining category.

The title-winning team for the men's artistic category saw POET Wright pick up a silver medal in the over-18 section,



● Members of the triumphant Royal Navy Gymnastics Team show off their medal haul

with AB Daniel Dempsey fifth and AB Aiden Sartin in ninth.

Lt Cdr Westbrook picked up a silver medal in the over-30 category while CPOPT McCormick finished fourth in the over-40 section.

Two of the team hadn't taken part in a competition before, and AB Dempsey had to learn

his high bar and floor routines a mere ten minutes before the contest started as he had been deployed at sea.

POET Wright said: "The Royal Navy Gymnastics team has been training hard since the British Vets last year, putting together new routines and learning new moves.

"The competition was a lot tougher this year with more people competing and to a higher standard of gymnastics, with our coach being deployed made it even more difficult.

"It was such an amazing feeling coming second in the country in my age category, after narrowly missing out last year

and for the team to get gold for two years in a row."

CPOPT McCormick said: "Becoming the National Champions in 2016, our first year of competing, put us under immense pressure to retain the title.

"This year, we suffered setbacks due to key personnel being deployed, but I am immensely proud of the team for their perseverance and commitment in training.

"In the true spirit of the RN, the team came together to work on new routines, coaching and mentoring the newest members to the team, in preparation for the British Championships.

"The team excelled this year, with four Individual National medallists, and two Team National Medals, where we retained our British National Champions Title.

"As the newest sport in the RN, we continue to grow and perform above our competition on the national circuit, which is testament to the dedication and commitment of the team.

"For RN Gymnastics to be the No 1 team in the country for the second year running is something we are all proud of."

The Royal Navy Gymnastics Association, which has training venues across the country, is open to males, females, regulars and reservists in the Royal Navy and Royal Marines. Anyone wishing to join should visit the [Royal Navy Gymnastics](https://www.facebook.com/RoyalNavyGymnastics) Facebook page.

Peru take honours

BRITANNIA Royal Naval College Football Club faced a strong Peruvian Navy side in a friendly fixture arranged during the country's sail training ship's visit to the UK.

The Peruvian Naval students travelled to BRNC from London where the four-masted tall-ship BAP Union was berthed for a six-day visit.

Despite the absence of many of BRNC's first team due to training commitments, the match started well but it was goalless at half time.

The second half kicked off with some fresh legs and the BRNC team again started strongly. But despite the renewed efforts, the Peruvians took the lead and five minutes later the visitors extended their lead with another goal.

The game ended with a 2-1 win for the Peruvian side, who it transpired were the South American Naval Academy futbol champions.

The BAP Union is the second tallest sailing ship in the world.

Tiny record

ROYAL Navy indoor rower WO1 Tiny Nash has set another British record for his men's heavyweight 50-50 age group.

The HMS Terneraire man rowed a time of 1 hour 15mins 24.5 secs for a half marathon.

The record was set with an average pace of 1 min 47.2 secs per 500m at 26 strokes per min and now sits alongside his earlier similar achievement for 6,000m.

Having won a bronze over the iconic 2,000m distance at the World Indoor Rowing Championships in Boston, USA, in February, Nash will be looking to further improve his performance levels at a range of races and distances up to 10,000m during the forthcoming race season.

Kitesurfers enjoy swell time in Spain



NO sporting trip is complete without an 'on the bus – off the bus' affair, and Spain didn't disappoint, writes Lt Nick Horne, a member of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Kitesurfing Association.

The pre-booked bus service company was caught off guard that a group of military kite surfers would be bringing along a lot of kit.

But once at the hotel, the team wasted no time in unpacking the kite kit and heading down to the beach.

The team pushed out onto the water with much vigour. The wind was good but had an off-shore element to it which necessitates rescue boat service cover.

Curious to see how it is possible to rescue a kitesurfer with 25m of lines dangling in the water, attached to a large kite in windy conditions on a jet ski; I didn't have to wait long to get my answer. In fact the team collectively were rescued 12 times after various equipment breakages, over-egged backroll attempts and general enthusiastic riding.

There was a mix of abilities in attendance,

Lt Cdr Chris Hughes, Tom Weaver and Tim Anderson were out to 'smash a back roll straight off the beach' with some entertaining, but in the end, successful results.

Lt Cdr Matt Longman, WO Tabbs Tabbenor RM, Lts Helen Dobbs and Rory Force made huge steps in their riding and jumping skills, as well as gaining instruction on how to 'go big' when jumping from CSgt Trevor 'Trevs' Calvert RM.

The majority of kitesurfers use a twin tip board that enables the rider to sail in either direction and allows for a vast array of tricks and aerial manoeuvres; however, Surg Cdr Andy Nelstrop ditched the twin tip for most of the week and instead was riding a surfboard (AKA a directional).

Riding the directional allows for a more surf style ride, using waves and chop to carve up the beach break.

I also chose to put down the twin tip for a lot of the week in favour of trying to learn to ride a foil board.

This style of board is another directional, but comes up out of the water to glide about

a metre above it, much like the Americas Cup yachts.

This style of riding allows for much faster speeds (up to 2.5 times wind speed). Graceful learning it was not!

But by the end of the week I was able to ride up and down wind.

Heading up the club was Cdr Henry Merewether, who spent a lot of his time keeping a watchful eye out and 'counting in the planes' after each rescue from the jet skis.

All in, the team had a fantastic week of training in an excellent location and the five-star hotel experience really set it off nicely.

The club looks in good shape to 'take it to em' at the Inter-Service competition later this year.

Anyone wishing to give kitesurfing a go can enquire or sign up to the club, which provides training opportunities, grassroots weekends, trips and meets as well as kit that can be borrowed.

Contact Wesley Langley at rnrnkaevents@gmail.com or check the RNRNKA Facebook page.

Spin me round



A MIGHTY discus throw of 24.48m by LPT Andrea Marshall landed her a silver medal in the Inter-Service Athletics Championships.

The club, based at the Royal Marines School of Music, was one of 11 Senior Service medal winners at the event, hosted by the Royal Navy at the Victory Stadium in Portsmouth.

The RN Women outperformed the men, taking eight medals and finishing within striking distance of the RAF Women, whereas the Senior Service Men's team ended with three medals.

Bugler Alex Lynch (RMSM) took third place in the men's hammer, with a throw of 38.56m, while OC Kiani Pay (BRNC) finished third in the women's event with a throw of 21.63m before going on to finish second in the shot putt with an effort of 10.25m. She missed out on a medal in the long jump by three centimetres.

AB Melissa Cole (COMUKMARFOR) took silver in the javelin with a throw of 34.2m, missing out on gold by three centimetres.

Former GB junior international heptathlete AB Leah Parsons (HMS Ocean) won silver in the high jump with a leap of 1.45m but missed out on medals in the long and triple jump events.

NA(SE) Nicola Roder (RNAS Yeovilton)

broke her own RN 5,000m record in 2016 without winning a medal, and this year she was shy of the record, but took a hard-earned silver. Lt Rachel Aldridge (Royal Centre for Defence Medicine, Birmingham) won silver in the women's 800m with a time of 2min 22.1 sec.

Completing the women's medal haul was AB Danielle Chapman (43 Cdo) with bronze in the 100m hurdles.

For the men NA Dale Willis (RNAS Culdrose) finished second in both the men's 400m, with a season-best time of 49.9sec, and the 200m, with a personal best time of 22.2 sec.

Twelve members of the RN team finished in fourth place, including former Nigerian international record holder LH(SC) Olusoji Fasuba, of HMS Somerset.

Lt Neal Edwards (CHF) ran close to a season's best in the 400m hurdles with a time of 59.2sec, then two weeks later ran 58.56sec to take European Master's (M45+) silver medal in Denmark.

Other fourth-place finishers included debutants ET(ME) Harry Tucker (HMS Sultan) in the men's high jump (1.75m), Sub Lt Doug Wilkie (HMS Sultan) in the men's 3k steeplechase (10min 43sec) and Mnes Alan Chetwynd (RMR London) and James Wright (CLR) in the men's 5k

(16min 28.3sec) and 800m (2min 6.2sec) respectively.

Cpl Chris Gill (CLR) was fourth in the men's discus with a throw of 30.35m and Lt Aldridge missed out on a medal in the women's 1,500m with a time of 5min 04.4sec.

The unluckiest of all fourth-place finishers was Lt Lauren Woodcock (HMS Collingwood) who lost out by 0.1sec in the women's 800m.

Submariner ET(ME) Rikki James doubled up in the men's 1,500m and 3,000m steeplechase events, while Mne Tom Waite, of 40 Cdo, took part in the pole vault, long jump and shot putt.

NA Dale Willis and OC Pay were selected to represent the UK Armed Forces Athletics Track and Field team at the combined Inter Counties/England Championships held at Bedford.

Willis pushed close to his season's best time of 48.9 secs as he reached the men's 400m semi-final with a time of 49.2 secs.

Competing in the women's shot putt, Pay threw a lifetime best of 11.33m to finish tenth.

RN athletes LH(SC) Fasuba, NA Willis and Mne Wright acted as flagbearers at the World Athletics Championships in London.



• Far left, Lt Rachel Aldridge leads the pack in the women's 1,500m; Left, AB Ciara Boylan; Above, the RN squad; Right, Mne James Wright, of CLR, in the men's 4x400m relay race

Pictures: Sgt Russ Nolan RLC



• Top, ET(ME) Harry Tucker; Second row, from left, RM Bugler Alex Lynch, ET(ME) Rikki James and Mne Tom Waite; Above, from left, AET Bobby Smale hands over the baton to AET Brendan McKenna; Lt Lauren Woodcock hands over to Sub-Lt Emily Gunning; Left, Lt Doug Wilkie negotiates the water in the 3,000m steeplechase



'How to welcome a Queen...'

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morning – tidal conditions, sea state, and visibility were good – sight of newly-installed navigation beacons inside and outside the harbour is crucial to safe arrival and departure – HMS Queen Elizabeth lined up for final approach.

The lights on the beacons and buoys flashed. Bright lights on the Sea King and Merlins in the helicopter fly-past twinkled as they flew down the carrier's port beam. Camera flashes rippled along the seafront like muzzle flashes of cannon fired in rapid succession.

On the top-floor balconies of apartments in Old Portsmouth's Broad Street, many adorned with banners and the national flag, there was the chink of champagne glasses as early-risers toasted the future flagship.

Amid the cheers, click and whirr of camera shutters and smartphones, drone of engines, tumult of horns and klaxons, the odd firework and the occasional skirl of bagpipes. The tune? *The Skye*

Boat Song.

By the time the carrier's bow reached Round Tower, the helicopters were well ahead of the bonnie boat. At Gunwharf, all eyes turned skywards for the fly-past, heralding the imminent arrival of the warship.

Gasps and shrieks of 'There she is', 'Wow' and 'Oh my God, she's massive' greeted Queen Elizabeth as she towered over properties in Old Portsmouth.

And then, a couple of minutes ahead of her planned 7.09am arrival, the aircraft carrier's bow nudged its way through the mouth of the harbour, metres from shore.

The Gunwharf crowds fell silent, overawed at the sight. But a minute later, as klaxons sounded, the spectators began cheering, applauding and waving their Union Jacks.

Parents and grandparents lifted small children on to their shoulders; once again, camera shutters whirred; iPhones and iPads clicked away as the Merlins returned for another flypast, this time in the company of two Hawk jets

from 736 NAS at Culdrose.

More interested in the ship than the skies was Samantha Butler. A bright red coat ensured she stood out in the crowd at a packed Gunwharf Quays.

Her partner, LH Ollie Oakley, spotted her straight away from the starboard waist of HMS Queen Elizabeth as she made her way into Portsmouth Harbour.

"I could see him and he could see me, it was great," said Samantha. "I wanted to come here and watch Queen Elizabeth come in and see where Ollie has been for so long."

Joining Samantha was Ollie's gran Marlene Barnes, who said: "I was ready to come here at 2am. I am so proud."

The two women made the trip from Gosport to be in position at 5.15am and a number of spectators were already lining the waterfront of the historic site which, before it became a leisure and shopping destination, served the Royal Navy for over a

century as HMS Vernon.

On Round Tower, the Mills family from Borehamwood were out in force: dad Steve, mum Angie, brother Steve, and Auntie Marie. Aboard HMS Queen Elizabeth, radar operator AB George Mills. He may have been among the hundreds of sailors and industry contractors lining the flight deck for Procedure Alpha but, despite the ship's proximity to the tower as she passed the harbour entrance, they could not see him.

"Was it worth it? Absolutely," said Auntie Marie. "It's not just about seeing our George on there. It's a once-in-a-lifetime occasion. As a country, we're very good at this. We do these things right, properly."

Watching tugs manoeuvre the carrier into her new berth at the recently-renamed Princess Royal Jetty from the vantage point of HMS Diamond's flight deck, First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Philip Jones described the arrival as "another seminal moment in the long history of the Royal Navy in Portsmouth".

He continued: "Today, we've shown the world how to welcome a Queen.

"In 50 years' time, people in Portsmouth will still talk about the day they saw this 65,000-tonne giant arrive for the first time."

So much for the occasion. And the ship herself, well she, says the nation's senior sailor, is "the embodiment of Britain in steel and spirit."

"In the years and decades to come, she and her sister ship will demonstrate the kind of nation we are – not a diminished nation, withdrawing from the world, but a confident, outward-looking and ambitious nation, with a Royal Navy to match."

As he hosted Prime Minister Theresa May – the first VIP visitor to HMS Queen Elizabeth in her home port – the public filed away from the seafront, still in awe at the size of the carrier: 'Amazing,' 'fantastic sight' and yet more 'wows'.

Michelle and Mark Jackson had left their Brighton home at 3am to grab their place on the waterfront.

"We wanted to be here to see the ship arrive; we can't believe how big she is, it's brilliant and worth getting up so early for," said Michelle.

Martha Edwards made her way back to Chichester. "I feel quite emotional seeing all of this," she said. "I knew the ship was big but didn't realise quite how big. I am so glad I came to see her – she looked great."

Portsmouth local Isla King was touched by the huge turnout. "What an amazing sight, it makes me feel so proud that so many people have come to show their support to the Navy," she said.

And from John Nicolson, who travelled along the coast from Bognor with his wife Jen: "That was the best thing ever. I am chuffed that we made the effort to get here. The ship is awesome. What a brilliant start to the day."

"We're planning on coming back next week to take a harbour tour and see her again. She's going to be fantastic for the Royal Navy and for the country."



pictures: po(photos) ray jones, ian simpson, lphotos jay allen, kyle heller, pepe hogan, dan resenbaum

